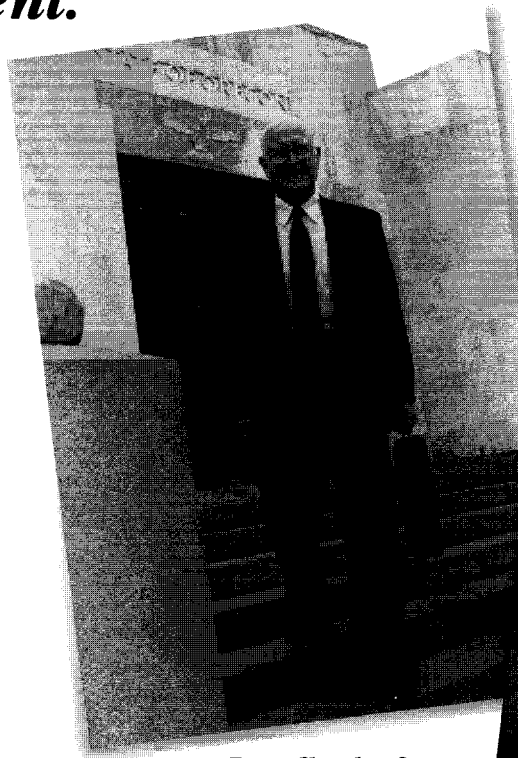


CHALCEDON *Report*

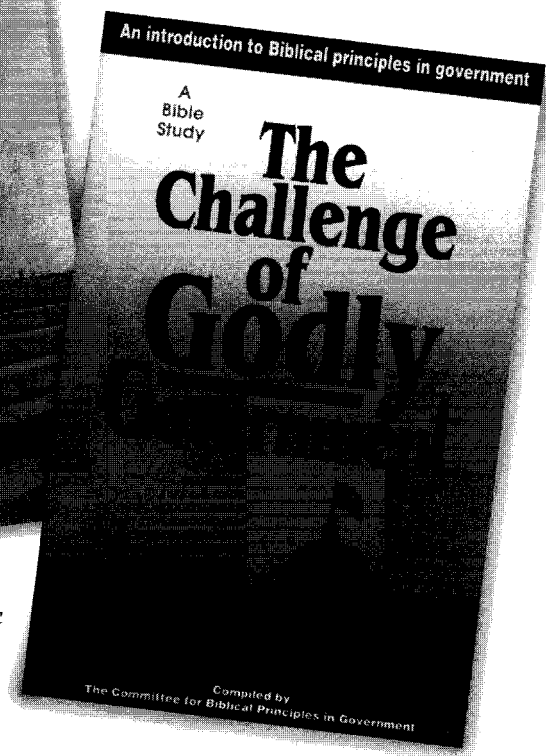
*The Committee for
Biblical Principles in
Government:*

No. 388, November 1997

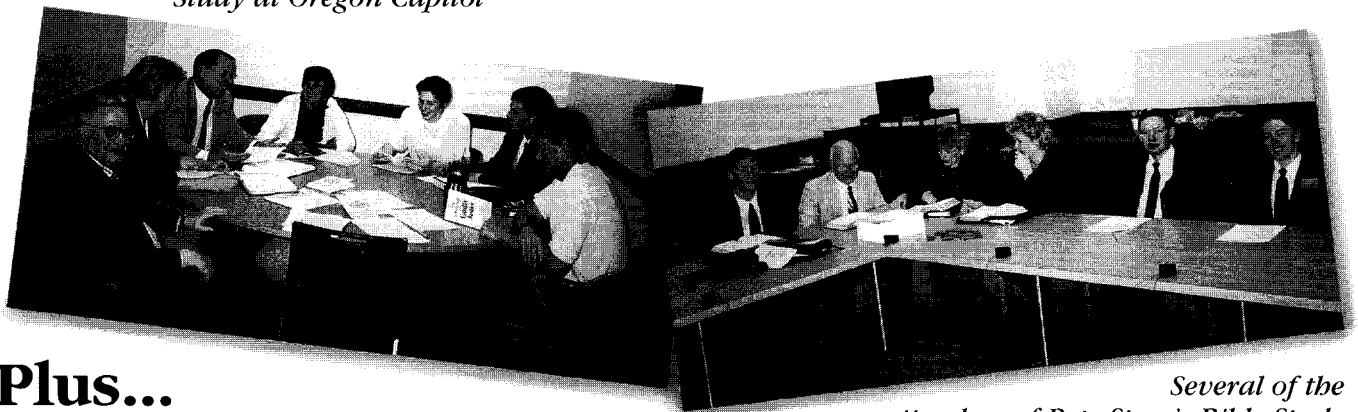
*Shaping
Oregon
Politics
for Jesus
Christ
(See page 20)*



*Rep. Charles Starr,
member of board of directors of CBPG*



*Pastor Michael O'Brien leads Bible
Study at Oregon Capitol*



*Several of the
attendees of Rep. Starr's Bible Study*

Plus...

*R. J. Rushdoony on Patience
Byron Snapp on Egalitarian Clothing
Joseph P. Braswell on Gordon Clark*

The Creed of Christian Reconstruction

Rev. Andrew Sandlin
[May be Freely Reproduced]

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Calvinist**. He holds to historic, orthodox, catholic Christianity and the great Reformed confessions. He believes God, not man, is the center of the universe—and beyond; God, not man, controls whatever comes to pass; God, not man, must be pleased and obeyed. He believes God saves sinners—He does not help them save themselves. A Christian Reconstructionist believes the Faith should apply to all of life, not just the “spiritual” side. It applies to art, education, technology, and politics no less than to church, prayer, evangelism, and Bible study.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Theonomist**. Theonomy means “God’s law.” A Christian Reconstructionist believes God’s law is found in the Bible. It has not been abolished as a standard of righteousness. It no longer accuses the Christian, since Christ bore its penalty on the cross for him. But the law is a statement of God’s righteous character. It cannot change any more than God can change. God’s law is used for three main purposes: First, to drive the sinner to trust in Christ alone, the only perfect law-keeper. Second, to provide a standard of obedience for the Christian, by which he may judge his progress in sanctification. And third, to maintain order in society, restraining and arresting civil evil.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Presuppositionalist**. He does not try to “prove” that God exists or that the Bible is true. He holds to the Faith because the Bible says so, not because he can “prove” it. He does not try to convince the unconverted that the gospel is true. They already know it is true when they hear it. They need repentance, not evidence. Of course, the Christian Reconstructionist believes there is evidence for the Faith—in fact there is nothing *but* evidence for the Faith. The problem for the unconverted, though, is not a lack of evidence, but a lack of submission. The Christian Reconstructionist begins and ends with the Bible. He does not defend “natural theology,” and other inventions designed to find some agreement with covenant-breaking, apostate mankind.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Postmillennialist**. He believes Christ will return to earth only after the Holy Spirit has empowered the church to advance Christ’s kingdom in time and history. He has faith that God’s purposes to bring all nations—though not every individual—in subjection to Christ cannot fail. The Christian Reconstructionist is not utopian. He does not believe the kingdom will advance quickly or painlessly. He knows that we enter the kingdom through much tribulation. He knows Christians are in the fight for the “long haul.” He believes the church may yet be in her infancy. But he believes the Faith will triumph. Under the power of the Spirit of God, it cannot *but* triumph.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Dominionist**. He takes seriously the Bible’s commands to the godly to take dominion in the earth. This is the goal of the gospel and the Great Commission. The Christian Reconstructionist believes the earth and all its fulness is the Lord’s—that every area dominated by sin must be “reconstructed” in terms of the Bible. This includes, first, the individual; second, the family; third, the church; and fourth, the wider society, including the state. The Christian Reconstructionist therefore believes fervently in Christian civilization. He firmly believes in the separation of church and state, but not the separation of the state—or anything else—from God. He is not a revolutionary; he does not believe in the militant, forced overthrow of human government. He has infinitely more powerful weapons than guns and bombs—he has the invincible Spirit of God, the infallible word of God, and the incomparable gospel of God, none of which can fail.

He presses the crown rights of the Lord Jesus Christ in every sphere, expecting eventual triumph.

CHALCEDON Report

*A Monthly Report
Dealing With the Relationship of
Christian Faith to the World*

Contents:

Chalcedon Scholars:

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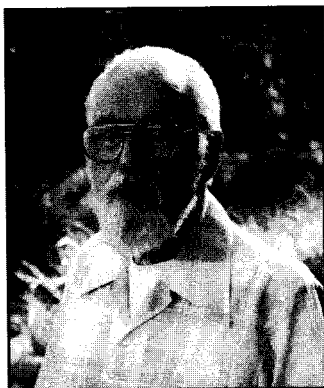
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Patience

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony



A few years ago, a comic strip showed a minister on his knees, praying for patience. After his "amen," feeling no surge of patience, he looked up to heaven, demanding, "Well?!"

We miss the point, in any study of patience, if we forget that patience is presented to us first of all as an aspect of God's dealings with us. Many texts such as Exodus 34:6 and

Numbers 14:18 tell us that patience is primarily an aspect of God's own being and nature. God is very patient with us who constantly try his patience. His attitude is often called "long-suffering," an accurate term for his readiness to wait for us to repent and to change.

This is why our impatience towards one another and towards God is so ugly a vice. And to be impatient is a vice. Too many of us are easily testy and impatient, and we act as though this is a sign of higher standards on our part. Impatient people are a trial to be around because their demands take priority over courtesy and respect.

God is spoken of as "the God of patience and consolation," and it is Paul's prayer that we be "like-minded one toward another according to Jesus Christ" (*Rom. 15:5*). In Revelation 13:10, John speaks of "the patience and the faith of the saints," and many texts make clear that patience is a mark of faith. Too many people seem to think that their impatience means a superior faith! R. Gregor Smith rightly spoke of patience as "a lively outgoing power of faith, an active energy rather than a passive resignation."

Too many impatient people act as though their impatience is a mark of superior virtue as they put up with miserable sinners! Such people act as if their discourtesy and rudeness are marks of a higher moral status, and they seem to feel martyred at putting up with the rest of us! The impatient are not peaceful people. They create storms with their demands. And they are shocked when someone calls attention to their bad conduct.

Peace, together with patience, should be our normal

behavior. Because God has been and is supremely patient with us, we must be patient towards one another.

The impatient may not always be wrong on issues, but they are almost always wrong in their attitudes. All one needs to do is to examine one's relationship to the Lord to realize that our own sins and shortcomings are very real. Our criticisms are rarely effectual, and too often unmasked critiques only hurt, irritate, or anger. Prayer can be more effectual in making changes. Of course, the change then is not our doing, nor a plus to our credit, so impatient and hard words come more readily to us!

We live in an impatient age, one whose demand too long has been "Utopia Now!" Usually, the only thing that comes that quickly is hell on earth. Apparently too many people want hell now because they certainly work to create it! How about you?

R. J. Rushdoony in Washington, D.C.

R. J. Rushdoony will be addressing the National Conference of the Separation of School and State Alliance, Friday, November 21. For more information call 209-292-1776 or consult www.sepschool.org.

Major Announcement

While Chalcedon, by God's grace, is increasing in ministry and influence, we are limited by a lack of administrative staff. We find it difficult even to respond to all letters, e-mail, and phone calls. If you wish for Chalcedon not merely to succeed, but to flourish, we urge you to send your largest ever donation this year's end.

We exist, humanly speaking, because of your faithful generosity.

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Divine and Human Freedom

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin

The Tyranny of Non-Christian Freedom



The most objectionable tenet of the Reformed Faith to the mind of its detractors is its view of absolute predestination and election.¹ Though it is a doctrine taught plainly in the Bible² and by the leading Western church father, Augustine,³ and expressed forcibly in the writings of John Calvin and in the Canons and Decrees of the Synod of Dort,

moderns suckled on heady notions of freedom in our ultra-democratic age find the bare mention of the possibility of divine predestination simply monstrous.

To the mind of modern man, if he is to be free, he must be free in the sense that God is free—that is, absolute, unconditioned freedom. Of course, since God and man cannot be absolutely free simultaneously, eventually God is relegated to dependence on the absolute freedom of man. Man becomes the Great Predestinator; and, as Rushdoony has noted on several occasions, soon man in the form of the state begins to predestine every area of man's life in terms of an abstract antinomianism. Men, therefore, do not escape predestination; rather, they simply transfer it from God to man. In Rushdoony's language, predestination is an inescapable concept.⁴ The course of this depravity is methodical: first man asserts a measure of freedom from God; then he claims an equal or coordinate freedom with God; subsequently, he asserts that God must respond to man's freedom; and finally God becomes dependent on man and on man's freedom of choice for his very existence. This is the blasphemy of Nietzsche, as well as Marx, both of whom believed that God is the invention of the fertile mind of man. The French Revolution and Pol Pot's Cambodia are horrific testimonies to the perverse notion of the freedom of man. The idea of the freedom of man apart from God and his absolute freedom never leads to righteousness or utopia, but always to depravity, dystopia, and hell. Because man in his natural state is a depraved human being, he will always *will* to do evil.

Freedom in the Biblical Sense

The Bible does teach that man is a free being, but only in terms of an absolutely free God. Man can be derivatively free as a creature precisely because God is absolutely free as the Creator. Chapter three of the magisterial Westminster Confession of Faith, in addressing the issue of God's eternal

decree, states that "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass . . ." It correctly attaches as prooftexts Ephesians 1:11, Hebrews 6:17, and Romans 9:15, 18. It goes on immediately, however, to assert that this Biblical teaching in no way denies "the liberty or contingency of second causes," citing Acts 2:23, Matthew 17:12, Acts 4:27, 28, John 19:11, and Proverbs 26:33.

Unfortunately, many professed Calvinists are much more accomplished at affirming God's absolute freedom than man's derivative freedom. If the great error of Arminians is the notion that if man is to be free, he must be free in the sense that God is free, the error of some Calvinists is that if God is free, man cannot be free in any sense at all. But the God who created man out of his own image determined that man would be free to act within the plan of God. Man exists in a divinely created and covenantally shaped universe. He is, therefore, a *conditioned* being. He is conditioned by his past, his history, his body, his will, his emotions, his intelligence, his mind—every aspect of God's creation that comes to bear on him. God has at his disposal every aspect of his creation to fulfill his plan in the entire universe—including in man. But to say that man's life and his choices are not unconditioned is not to say that they are not in any sense free. Man acts according to his nature. The natural man sins because he wishes to sin. Sin is delightful to him. He is oriented to sin because he was born in sin.

If the great error of Arminians is the notion that if man is to be free, he must be free in the sense that God is free, the error of some Calvinists is that if God is free, man cannot be free in any sense at all.

The regenerate man is different. He is free from the power (though not the presence) of sin. It is no longer his nature to be sinful, although he will bear within him until his dying day the residue of the sinfulness of what St. Paul calls the "old man." Just as the unregenerate man is born in sin, so the regenerate man is born from above in righteousness. It is his nature to desire adherence to Christ, the Bible, and sanctification. Every time the unregenerate man sins in asserting his supposed freedom from God, he further binds himself to the sin which destroys true human freedom. Genuine human freedom is experienced only in Jesus Christ and in obedience to his Law-Word (*Jn. 8:36*). Therefore, *every assertion of human autonomy is equally an assertion of human bondage*. Likewise, every assertion

of human submission to the Lord Jesus and his word is equally an assertion of the greatest human freedom possible.

The Significance of Freedom for the Christian

The man who understands the doctrine of predestination and the proper relationship between divine and human freedom does not worry about them. They are not a source of vexation for him but a source of comfort. The Christian knows that because of absolute divine predestination, with man, all things are *not* possible. The greatest enemies of mankind are those men who believe that man is absolutely free. If man is absolutely free, then God, if he does exist, is a conditioned being dependent on the absolute predestinating man. The Christian glories in the doctrine of the divine predestination of human freedom, working out his own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that it is God who works in us to will and do his good pleasure (*Phil. 2:12, 13*). He sees these doctrines as he sees every other doctrine: in terms of the revelation of the sovereign, covenant-keeping God.

In every aspect of his life, a godly man attempts to obey and please God. He works tirelessly to advance Christ's kingdom in the earth, beginning with his own life, in his family, church, and wider society, including the state. He does not profess to comprehend every nook and cranny of the Biblical view of God's predestinating work, nor does he profess to understand all of God's providential dealings. He simply acknowledges that whatever God does, is good.

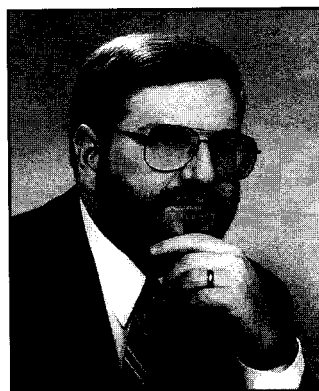
His responsibility is not to question the plan of God, but to obey the Word of God. He basks in the knowledge of God's absolute predestination, and works with the knowledge of his own creaturely freedom.

Attack of the Cannibalistic Vegetarian Sodomites

By Rev. Brian M. Abshire

(Disclaimer: The following column contains graphic descriptions of extreme depravity, humanist perversion and irreverent humor. Sensitive readers may want to skip directly to Rush's Random Notes. The explicit content is for educational purposes and any sensationalism, exploitation or gratuitous aspect are purely in the mind of the reader.)

Lessons From a Moldy Basement



I hate painting. I really do. And I do it only under protest. Recently my lovely wife pointed out that the mold on the basement walls had grown so large that it was demanding voting rights and welfare benefits. She then sweetly inquired what I thought we should do about it. I tried saying that mold too were God's creatures and had a right to a full and meaningful life. Besides, we might run afoul of some endangered species law. Elaine simply held up my column on hunting and said, "Dearest, if you can shoot fuzzie little wild animals, surely, a big strong man like you can take dominion over the basement."

So, armed with a spray bottle of bleach, brushes, rollers and six gallons of basement sealant paint, I grudgingly walked down to the utility side of the basement. My ten-year-old had hung a sign over the door saying, "Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here," while my seven-year-old clung to my legs saying, "Don't go in there Daddy; you'll never get out again," both grinning from here to here. Oh yeah, they're real cards, are my kids. They inherited their mother's looks, but their father's sad sense of irreverent humor.

My nine-year-old daughter, however, didn't like her brothers taking the Mickey out of dear old Dad and said, "Daddy, can we help you paint?" Well, misery loves company, and remembering Tom Sawyer I replied, "Of course, you can, sweetheart. In fact, you can all help; but this is a special job and it will cost you something." Unfortunately, my kids are too well read (I knew there was a down side to home schooling) and wouldn't buy it. However, the prospect of playing with all that paint, on all those walls, and doing it legally, was enough incentive all by itself.

After a few hours of washing, scrubbing and disinfecting with bleach, the mold turned out to be a good Republican,

¹ See, e.g., Jack W. Cottrell, "The Nature of Divine Sovereignty," in ed., Clark H. Pinnock, *The Grace of God, The Will of Man* (Grand Rapids, 1989), 97-119.

² Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Grand Rapids, 1951).

³ Geoffrey Bromiley, *Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1978), 110, 11.

⁴ Rousas John Rushdoony, *Politics of Guilt and Pity* (Fairfax, VA, 1978), 42.

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easily covered by whitewash. Overall, the painting went as well as could be expected, except that we should have thrown away the brushes and just let the five-year-old roll around. He managed to get covered with paint. ("Hey Daddy, look at me! I'm Casper!")

All and all, it was good for my sanctification. At one point, I noticed a set of handprints on the wall. "OK," I roared, "Who leaned against the wall?" For a moment, there was a pregnant silence, followed by all FOUR of the oldest kids slowly holding up their paint-smearred hands!

Eventually, after finishing the first coat, I stumbled upstairs to my office, exhausted, drenching with sweat and glad to be able to get back to my computer and books (meanwhile, my longsuffering wife was still downstairs, cleaning up the mess and mumbling something about a nunnery).

It struck me that though painting the basement was a dirty, disgusting job, my wife was perfectly correct; it was also absolutely necessary. And in one sense, that basement is a microcosm of the task facing Christian Reconstruction. The basement had once been painted, a whole generation ago. But decades of neglect had allowed a small problem to become a big one. If the walls had been washed with disinfectant once a year, the mold, mildew and alien life forms setting up colonies would never have had a chance to become established. But because I had abdicated responsibility, now the clean-up work was far harder than it ought to have been. But now the dungeon was clean, bright and useable. All it took was some dedication, hard work (and four coats of paint!).

Epistemological Self-Consciousness

Sitting in my office thinking of these things, I turned on the Idiot Box to catch the late afternoon news. I wasn't really paying much attention to the One-Eyed god until I heard something about over-population that sparked my interest. It seems that inadvertently, the channel was tuned to one of those late afternoon talk/shock shows that specialize in the bizarre. (I say, "inadvertently," because I wouldn't want to admit in public that I watch this kind of freak show intentionally.)

Too tired to reach for the remote control, and against my better judgment, I began watching the program a little more closely. It seems that the day's episode dealt with a weird religious cult concerned about there being too many people in the world. As a solution, they recommended vegetarianism, suicide, sodomy and, grab your stomach, cannibalism. One man, dressed in a clerical collar, walked around with a rubber chicken crucified on a large cross. A really ugly woman was screeching about meat packers being modern-day Nazis (later it turned out that the ugly woman was really a male transvestite).

The specific issue revolved around a young woman interested in joining the cult and her boyfriend's attempts to discourage her. He failed, and she was inducted into the cult and immediately dressed herself in a dominatrix outfit (and shame on you if you know what that means!). In the interest of "equal time," the program brought on a Christian little old lady who with tears in her eyes told the cannibals that Jesus loved them too (personally speaking, I think he has a special place in Hell

for them, right next to the abyss where talk show hosts are kept).

Now the host and the audience were having a wonderful time being outraged by these refugees from a psycho ward, but believe it or not, I found myself in sympathy with the cannibals. Both they and the audience began from the same basic assumptions; *i.e.*, man is merely an animal, human freedom means doing just what each individual wants, there are no absolute moral judgments to be made, there is a genuine ecological crisis coming that demands radical solutions, etc. While the audience didn't like the cannibals' conclusions, they shared the exact same premises, premises taught in every public school, state university, and highlighted nightly in all the "mainstream" media. There is no logical stopping place between what the premier academics of the past hundred years have been teaching and what the cannibals are proposing. If you grant the cannibals their premises, then logically, their solutions are not only reasonable, but, in many respects, inevitable. The cannibals were simply more consistent, and more honest than the bland, middle-American audience jeering and hooting at them.

*You cannot have the fruit of
Christian culture without the
root.*

If man is just another animal, and there is no moral difference between the two, and if humans have rights, then why not animals as well? And if eating animal meat is moral, why not eat the flesh of dead people? That way, people who want to eat meat can do it, without hurting all the poor little innocent animals. Isn't it better than just burying all that good protein in the ground? (Well, actually there are good, medical reasons for not being a cannibal, but since when do facts ever enter into this kind of religious debate?). If there are no moral absolutes apart from the individual, why shouldn't teenagers commit suicide when depressed and despondent? Who's to say that they are wrong for killing themselves because they didn't get a date for Friday night? And if there really are too many people in the world, and if there is no sovereign God whose law reigns supreme, why shouldn't you abort babies or encourage sodomy as an alternative to normal heterosexual relations?

The simple fact is that the Cannibalistic, Vegetarian Sodomites are simply being epistemologically self-conscious modernists. They are just taking the next, logical step in the humanist attack on the sovereignty of God. Neither the audience, nor the holier-than-thou host, had any moral basis for criticizing their position. They may not have chosen to adopt the same behaviors, but they had no basis to call them immoral. For both groups deny God and his Kingdom, and one is just a little more consistent in promoting the fruits of their rebellion than the other.

What neither group wants to realize is that you cannot have the fruit of Christian culture without the root. The world before the gospel was a vicious, nasty place, filled with the most horrendous acts. The ancient Greeks exposed their children to be eaten by wild animals while extolling the benefits of paedophilia. The Romans raped and pillaged their way through the ancient Mediterranean world, enslaving everyone they met. The Celtic tribes in Europe butchered people like hogs in their worship of demonic forces. The Aztecs in the Americas sacrificed entire nations by ripping out people's hearts in bloody worship of the sun. Even the charming Inuit people of North America left their parents on ice floes to be eaten by polar bears, or freeze to death in the Arctic weather. It was only with the coming of the gospel of Jesus Christ that concepts such as liberty, justice, and protection of the innocent became cultural norms.

It is one thing to read in history about the last days of a decadent culture, just before God brings the hammer down. It is something different to actually experience it. You see, like the long-neglected basement walls, Christians have failed to disinfect this culture. We have allowed the rot of humanism to grow and flourish in the dark, dank places while we went merrily on our way. And now, we've got a lot of hard work to do to clean up the mess and put things back to rights. Granted, the people we are talking about are kooks (and their bizarre beliefs, a form of street theater to "raise people's consciousness" about their social agenda). But what is said today in jest is practiced tomorrow in sincerity. When a culture turns its back on God, he turns his back on it, allowing it to become foolish in its speculations, darkening hearts, and giving bodies over to impurity and judgment (*cf. Rom. 1:20ff*). These are the people who will be running this culture for the foreseeable future. And we are the ones who let it all happen.

Do these wackos frighten me? No, they are pathetic little people, hardly to be taken seriously. They are mere footnotes in the history of the death of a culture. But they are a symptom of a much greater evil, the evil of a flourishing, God-hating philosophy subsidized by Christian capital because we were too lazy to clean up the mess. And like the mold on a dark, dank, basement wall they are something that needs to be scoured clean and washed away with all the other filth. But it will take a lot of work—dirty, tiring and unglamorous work, but absolutely necessary work—unless we want the cannibals to win (for a time) and our children, and grandchildren, to grow up in their world.

There is a new world coming. It remains only to be seen whether we or our far-distant descendants experience the joys of a reconstructed society. The suicides will kill themselves, the over-population nuts will abort their future, the sodomites will emasculate themselves, and the cannibals will eat each other.

But our children, and their children, and their children's children will inherit the earth.

Now isn't that worth a little hard work and sweat?

Urban Nations Update: Roll Your Own

By Steve M. Schlissel

For 32 million Americans, English is a second language. In that little fact lies a world of mission opportunity. The concentration of nationalities found in New York City makes a ministry such as Urban Nations a necessity here, a natural. But it is just as natural for most North American churches to start an Urban Nations-type ministry wherever God has placed them. It is part of our objective to duplicate this outreach in faithful churches of Jesus Christ. So save this article, then call me with your questions. Here is how you can roll your own.

One: The Need. Assess it. Pray about it, too. Do you have a large immigrant population? (The language or number of languages is immaterial.) If yes, proceed.

Two: The Facility. Do you have a facility with areas that can be used for classroom instruction? If yes, you're ahead of the game already.

Three: The Faculty. Do you have volunteers who 1) love the Lord, 2) love people, 3) are patient, and 4) can speak English clearly? If yes, you're practically home.

Four: The Curriculum. You must first survey your facilities and your staff levels. Then determine how many levels of instruction you can reasonably offer. Bare-bones operations should offer Level I only (most students will be in this group; they can read English but have little vocabulary and less confidence). More resources? Consider offering six levels: Pre-Level I (alphabet and phonics), Level I, Level II, Conversation, Advanced Conversation, Professional (accent elimination, etc., for immigrant professionals who believe this will help them advance).

Curriculum resources, happily, are on the increase. Our core curriculum comes from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (1-800-634-2462). It is called "English Lessons From The Bible: Book of Mark." It has two levels, each with a student and teacher edition. The teacher's edition has lesson objectives and suggestions for instructions, as well as answers to all drills and tests. Overall, the curriculum is excellent. Two glaring flaws, however, are the cartoon caricatures of Jesus and the occasionally blatant antinomianism. ("The Pharisees believed in Law. Jesus believed in Love." Oh, mercy!) The latter can be dealt with by the instructor with a simple: "Skip this page and go on to the next." (Remember, you know English and they don't.) The former can only be remedied when a committed Reformed person sees through the development of a thoroughly orthodox curriculum. In the meantime, we'll continue to avail ourselves of these. (Other material is available: Contact David Schildkraut at 718-648-4833 if you need more information about resources.)

Five: Policies. You need to establish several; we recommend they include the following: a) The program must be up-front about being Christian. Prospective and incoming students must

be clearly told that it is church-sponsored and Bible-based. No bait and switch! b) Because the classes involve explicit, Christian instruction (they very much resemble evangelistic Sunday School classes in style and content), women should not teach men (*1 Tim. 2; 1 Cor. 14*). c) Fees. We recommend a registration fee of \$50 per level and \$1 per class. Even if your expenses are taken care of, charging a fee is the righteous thing to do (in most cases).

Six: Set a date to begin registration week. Instructors should be flexible and expect students to arrive after classes have begun. Be reasonable.

Seven: Advertise. Get word of the program to the people by distributing notices in their neighborhoods and placing ads in ethnic newspapers. Hint: If you don't have someone on staff who can speak the target language, advertise in English. Most immigrants have friends or relatives who will help them through the registration process. But if you advertise in their language, they will expect to speak it when they call or show up.

Eight: Pray and Prepare. Have Bibles in all targeted language on-hand, as well as sound, Gospel literature.

Nine: Do the Lord's work faithfully. Teach humbly and patiently. Give excellent instruction in English, but keep Christ central. Never compromise. It's his ministry.

Sure, there are many details you may need help with, but most questions resolve themselves with sanctified common sense. For those that may be more knotty, we stand ready to assist. We ask just two things of your church: 1) that you at least consider adding Urban Nations to your church mission budget, and 2) that you allow us to boast of the Lord's blessing upon your labors. They are sure to come. Consider the following letter we received from a volunteer at a church we assisted in California:

"Last week our summer vacation from the English classes began. We had a party the last day of school. Students brought dishes from their native countries. It was fun. (I couldn't walk the next day because of too much food!) A lot of people who did not know about the Lord before are now interested. We had a family ask if it was OK for them to come to church on Sundays because they want to know more about the word of God. This family did not even know what the Bible looked like before coming for English lessons. We were just so happy to have these kinds of experiences. Another family showed up for a Wednesday night gathering where all the church's families get together to study the word of God! I can't wait for classes to start again. We finished the ministry year with 20 students. We are expecting double next semester. Now we need to pray for more teachers! The deacons, elders and the pastor are all very happy about this ministry. They are working on a plan to gather material for Sunday Bible studies for our students."

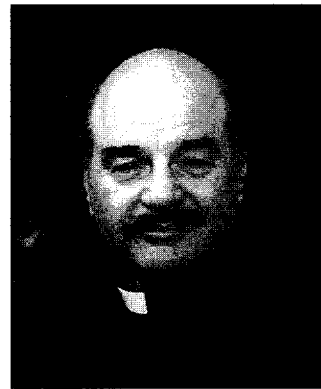
Praise God! Now, what are you waiting for? Roll your own!

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METHODS ARE PRIMARY

Dead Gods That Can't Bite

By Ellsworth McIntyre



All during my government education and even my religious education, this was taught as truth: "You can't legislate morality," or, "You can't legislate against religion." My teachers were foolish and wrong. Government can indeed legislate against false morality and false gods and destroy them, provided government is legislating under the sanction

of God's morality, his law and his religion. The truth is this: you cannot, using all the power of the civil government, create or destroy Christianity, but you surely can destroy any false religion using civil government in the name of Christ. All religion is not equal. Only Christianity stands, prospers, and grows in spite of civil government. My teachers, by saying, "You can't legislate morality," were really saying that false religion is equal to the genuine; that is to pretend that demons are equal to Christ.

The Bible teaches that false gods, demons, and even Satan himself cannot harm us except the Lord give permission (See *Job 1: 11, 12*). In spite of the fact that the Lord continually tells us that all power is given unto him in heaven and earth, Christians give fear to Satan and false religions instead of the true God. It is a deadly illusion to believe Satan and his hosts have free will. They do not. Only our Lord can act without permission. By our sin, we provoke the Lord to turn us over to the power of the forces of darkness. The Lord has plainly told us whom to fear. He said, ". . . fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (*Mt. 10:28*). Every Christian should fear God and all godly authority. Ignorance brings poverty, sickness, and premature death (*1 Cor. 11:30*). A life in hell can begin early, now, on this earth, and only a spiritual airhead presses on for more and worse suffering after death.

One doesn't need to vanish into the stacks of the library or consult wizards to assemble evidence of this truth; it is abundantly apparent. The truth lies before you on Easter, Halloween and Christmas.

On Easter, for example, our children will use as playthings eggs, rabbits and other symbols. These items once represented a powerful world-wide fertility cult that seemed to have a chokehold upon mankind.

Every Halloween, our children openly mock symbols of once powerful occult religions.

Every Christmas, once celebrated as the birthday of the sun, we now celebrate as the birthday of the true Son, the Creator of all things, the Lord Jesus Christ. We rejoice and celebrate the victory of true religion over false hope. In other words, the power of Christianity to vanquish phony religion is evident all about us every holiday of our lives.

Some modern-day evangelicals, however, operate as though "the devil made me do it," and such empty-headed theology. Some Christians have become cultist followers of books such as those written by Frank Peretti. Peretti's novels tend to celebrate the power of the demonic instead of the Lord's. We must teach children to fear the forces from above rather than those below. We cannot duck our responsibility for sin by claiming that we are powerless before our environment or false religion. The Lord sternly warns "that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man" (*Mk. 7:20*). We can do all things through Christ if we fear him and obey him and relegate the demons, false religion, and environment to their proper places.

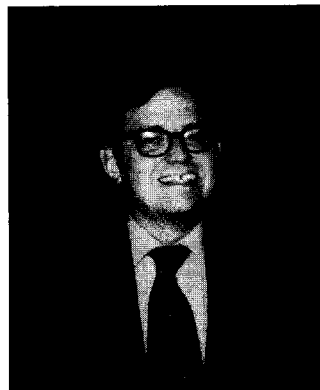
What does this have to do with education? It is very important to teach our children to never make excuses for breaking God's law. We teach demonic theology when we blame anyone or anything in our environment such as whisky, cigarettes, or half-naked women with overwhelming provocation that we couldn't resist. Children will follow our example as quick as a flash if we don't pastor them away from that pernicious trap. We infect children with this wimpy religion when we teach them to be afraid of dead occult symbols of vanquished religions. Children should learn never to excuse themselves, but to celebrate the victories of Christianity over all false gods.

When I was an adolescent Christian, I entertained all the above false ideas, and it is my prayer that my readers will learn from my errors. Enjoy your Christmas trees, your Easter eggs and making fun of dead gods. They cannot harm you provided you fear God and obey His Law-word. Teacher, father, mother, don't teach your children to fear dead gods that can't bite. Your baby may grow up to be a sullen, self-righteous, hyper-critical excuse-maker. Ecclesiastes 12: 13,14 states, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." If you would like to explore a career teaching children to be victorious, instead of defeated losers who believe all religion is equal, write me.

Ellsworth McIntyre, one of America's leading Christian educators, is pastor of Nicene Covenant Church and founder of Grace Community Schools. He is the author of How to Become a Millionaire in Christian Education. For more information contact him at 4405 Outer Dr., Naples, Florida 34112. This article is copyrighted by the author.

Egalitarian Clothing?

By Byron Snapp



As the summer heat reached Canada, a new debate erupted. According to *World*, July 12/19, 1997, last December the Ontario Appeal Court ruled that women could go topless. In our egalitarian age, one can readily perceive the reasoning for such action. Men do not have to wear clothing above their waists. Why should women? With the arrival of summer, numerous women availed themselves of the court's ruling. This has resulted in complaints from neighbors and passersby, particularly parents who do not want their sons exposed to topless women.

The point of this article is not to berate the decision. I believe it is wrong, but it was certainly expected in a society that supports full equality between male and female. I want to explore the Biblical facet. Why are women to clothe their breasts? In our egalitarian age it is necessary to point out that men and women are different. One difference is seen when both are topless. Scripture speaks quite differently regarding women's breasts than men's breasts. Note that in Proverbs 5:18, the father instructs his son to not become immorally involved with a woman to whom he is not married. Specifically he says, "Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love."

The female's breasts are attractive to the male. There is no problem with this in the context of marriage. By contrast there is a great problem with a males' looking upon the breasts of other women. First, those breasts are not the ones to bring the male satisfaction, even though they well might, if he saw them. The same can be said regarding clothing, or lack thereof, that women can wear to emphasize their breasts. Second, being stimulated through viewing a woman's breasts (other than his wife's), the male can easily move to greater lust and even to immoral sexual activity.

The Song of Solomon has numerous references to a woman's breasts satisfying her husband. Examples include Song of Solomon 4:5; 7:3, 7. Scripture does speak to men about lustfully viewing the breasts of a woman to whom they are not married. This is described in terms of adultery (*Mt. 5:28*). Speaking of Israel's spiritual adultery, Hosea wrote, "Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; for she is not thy wife, nor am I her husband! Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts" (*Hos. 2:2*). Ezekiel spoke similarly. Israel and Judah "committed harlotry in Egypt, they committed harlotry in their youth; their breasts were there embraced, their virgin bosom was there pressed" (*Ez. 23:3*). A man can be visually attracted to a woman by other means.

Again returning to Proverbs, the father mentions several such attractions in his warnings to his son regarding avoiding the temptation of adultery: "her beauty" (6:25), "her eyelids" (6:25), and "her attire" (6:10). However, in the verses I have mentioned, her breasts are particularly pointed out as being attractive to the man. One aspect of modesty is that a woman cover them from the eyes of men, with the exception of her husband. Her breasts are to satisfy her husband, not other men. It should be little surprise that as Christian missionaries minister in pagan cultures in which men and women wear clothing only around their waists, that clothing changes as the Gospel makes inroads in that society. Soon women have covered their chests. The fact that different parts of the body are to be clothed relative to whether or not one is male or female underlines the fact that men and women are different.

Adam and Eve were created naked (*Gen. 2:25*). They remained so until after they sinned (*Gen. 3:1ff*). They then sewed fig leaves together (*Gen. 3:7*) and hid from God. Evidently Adam realized his clothing was inadequate to stand before a holy God. Wearing his homemade covering, Adam states, "I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself" (*Gen. 3:10b*). God then "made tunics of skin and clothed them" (v. 21). Although I have never read a book on the theology of clothing, I believe it is reasonable to say that a desire to cover our own physical nakedness is a reminder of our need of covering for our spiritual nakedness. This is a covering provided only in Christ's righteousness, imputed to God's elect.

In a humanistic society that denies God and man's need for him, we can expect man to expose himself physically. Such exposure can take a variety of forms, including streaking and female toplessness. If a society has no fear of being spiritually naked before God, why should it be ashamed to be physically naked? It was only when man realized his own sinfulness that he desired physical covering.

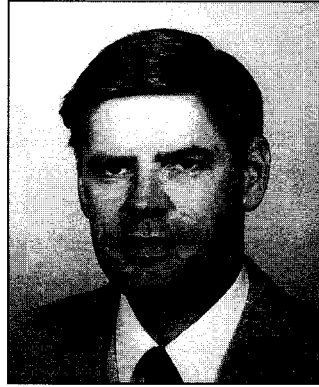
Thankfully, sinful man is not always consistent in his thinking. Thus, in many humanistic societies there is not the push to remove one's clothing in public. Partial or complete nudity is mainly limited to isolated beaches on this continent. When permission is given for more public disrobing, as recently in Canada, sufficient outcry is raised to cause authorities to rethink their position.

On what ground can they stand? The Bible provides basic principles for clothing as it does for every other aspect of living. Without appeal to it, man's attempt at sound reasoning is revealed to be naked. How we need Christians and churches to rise up and teach the current and succeeding generations the full counsel of God with relevant application to every area of life!

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God's Judicial Equity: What Goes Around Comes Around

By Larry E. Ball



Several years ago there was a popular movie titled "The Doctor." It was about an insensitive, heartless, physician with a terrible bedside manner who cared very little about people. He was a professional who treated his patients just a little better than he treated animals, although he was aware that these patients were the means to enable him to maintain a more than adequate

income for his life-style.

As the story goes, the physician became ill himself. He soon discovered that he had cancer. He had to become a patient and learn to deal with the complicated medical giant of hospitals and doctors as any other patient. He soon became very acquainted with some of the difficulties of being sick and having to survive medical tests and treatments which he had been prescribing for others for years.

The physician recovered from his bout with cancer, but it changed him completely. As the movie ends, it shows a physician at work who feels compassion for all his patients. Man, even in the depths of depravity, is often able to perceive and portray themes of justice like this one. We often have heard the proverbial "he got a dose of his own medicine." That was the theme of the movie. Other fitting adages are "What goes around comes around," "tit for tat," and "poetic justice."

What the world has captured in proverbial sayings, the word of God delineates as a principle of God's justice. It is not a natural law that exists in an evolutionary world, but rather the exhibition and execution of God's justice in his word and in his good providence in the life of men before they die. In other words, it is a principle of Scripture that God often executes his own justice in this world in such a way that those who do evil get a dose of their own medicine. What goes around does indeed come around!

Justice in History

The theme of this article is that the equity of God's justice is not always reserved for a future life, but sometimes can be clearly seen in the life we live now. We shall approach this theme by first appealing to the Scriptures and then conclude with some typical examples. This principle can be seen operative in Scriptures in at least two ways. First, God himself mandated this equity principle in the judicial laws of the Old Testament. Second, we can find numerous historical examples

in the Bible where God executed this principle in the lives of men. Third, modern examples can be illustrated which should make us all fearful of sin and God's justice. The penalty received for sin in this life is often identical to the harm perpetrated against a victim.

Biblical Teaching

First, the equity principle that "what goes around comes around" was mandated by God in the judicial laws of the Old Testament. Leviticus 24: 17-19 states, "Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death. Whoever kills an animal shall make it good animal for animal. If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him — fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him."

Setting aside the theonomic issue about the application of this passage today, it should be noticed that the underlying principle of equity reflects God's character of justice. The penalty received is identical to the harm perpetrated. This law has often been referred to as the "lex talionis" (law of vengeance) of Scripture, but I think we have missed a more important point since it teaches something of the attributes of God, and his methods of executing justice in the world in which we live. Damage to the eye must be penalized with damage to the eye. Death itself is the only satisfactory penalty for murder. The point is, "as he has done, so shall it be done to him. . . ." What goes around will come around. God's demand for equity in this life is manifested by his mandating it in his judicial laws.

In Deuteronomy 19:15-21, in the context of the law establishing the necessity of two or three witnesses, with regard to a false witness, the Bible says, "then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother. . . ." The penalty due a man who falsely accuses another was to suffer the same penalty of the one accused if the accused had been found guilty. Falsely accusing a brother of a crime deserving 39 lashes means that the false accuser must receive 39 lashes. The penalty received is identical to the harm perpetrated (in this case, by false accusation). Indeed, what goes around comes around.

In Matthew 26:51-52, during the incident where "one of those who were with Jesus" cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest with a sword, Jesus rebuked the act by reiterating this judicial principle in using language specific to the occasion, saying "all who take up the sword will perish by the sword." In other words, if you live by the sword, you shall die by the sword. You will not die by hanging or by the piercing arrow of a bow, but rather by the sword. We see again that the penalty received is identical to the harm perpetuated. What goes around comes around. This is an application of the general principle which supports the judicial law of the Old Testament.

In Matthew 7:1-5, Jesus warns about sinful judgment. He then states unequivocally that "with what judgment you judge, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." Here again we see the same principle of judicial equity underlying the Old Testament judicial law being applied by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. The same measure for measure, and the same judgment for judgment is

still the rule. How you deal with others, it shall likewise be done unto you.

In Mark 4:24-25, we have the same lesson with an explanation attached: "For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, what he has will be taken away from him." Possession is rewarded with possession, and emptiness will result in more emptiness. The penalty received is identical to the crime perpetrated. What goes around comes around.

Thus the Bible teaches in propositional form the character of God who exhibits and executes his justice in this world in such a fashion that the penalty matches the crime in an identical manner. This is the way God revealed himself to man in the Scriptures, and we should expect the manifestation of this principle in the providential events of men today.

Biblical Examples

Second, this principle is taught by example in the Scriptures. Events occurring in Scripture demonstrate that this is the way God deals with people. Examples of this are easily found throughout the Bible.

In 2 Samuel 12:9-11, we find David, after his sin of adultery with Bathsheba had been confessed. Interestingly, this passage occurs after Nathan the Prophet had said, "Thou art the man," and before David's confession in verse 13, that "I have sinned against the Lord." Following Nathan's rebuke and before David's confession, the Lord said,

Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house, and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of the sun.

After David heard that the penalty would be identical to the crime perpetrated, he confessed his sin to Nathan. Adultery perpetrated against another man will be punished by knowing the suffering that comes with adultery. Take another man's wife, and another man will take your wife. What goes around comes around.

In 1 Kings 15:28-29, we see that when King Baasha became King of Israel, he killed all the house of Jeroboam. "He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him. . . ." However, it should be noted that King Baasha would know the same suffering he had inflicted on the household of Jeroboam. In 1 Kings 16:11-12, we are told of King Zimri, the successor of Baasha, "Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha; he did not leave him one male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends. Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha. . . ."

When you destroy another man's household, expect your own household to be destroyed. It is again the principle of judicial equity applied in the providence of God. The penalty suffered often is identical to the crime perpetrated. What goes around comes around.

In Matthew 27:5, we are told that Judas Iscariot who betrayed Christ committed suicide. It is interesting how he

died. He died by hanging. "Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself." Jesus died hanging from a tree. Judas hanged himself. So we see again, that the penalty received is virtually identical to the suffering from the crime perpetrated. What goes around comes around.

Modern Examples

Having looked at some Scripture passages which demonstrate both from judicial law and from the execution of God's providence, let us now look at some examples in our modern world obvious to those today who have eyes to see.

One of the best examples I know which illustrates that God is actively carrying out providence in such a way today is that of modern state education. For years children in the state schools have been taught the theory of evolution as if it were scientific fact. Man came from monkeys. Monkeys were our ancestors. This teaching seemed harmless enough in the 60s, when I was in the state schools, but in the long run it proved to be a dangerous lie. Looking at the state schools today, we see that the penalty which they are suffering is identical to the crime perpetrated. Many of my friends who teach in the state schools can't wait to get out of what they call the "zoos." They retire at the age of 55 now (and some at the age of 50). My response is, "Monkey learn, monkey do." You are reaping what you sowed. If you teach children they come from monkeys, then do not be surprised when they start acting like monkeys. What would you expect? God's law of judicial equity teaches us that the penalty received is identical to the sin perpetrated. What goes around comes around.

Another prime example is the effect of liberalism in the modern church. When neo-orthodox preachers emptied the Bible of its authority, God began emptying their churches of his people. An empty Bible will result in empty pews. Everyone knows how the mainline (now sideline) churches are losing membership and closing down churches year by year. What goes around comes around. The penalty received is identical to the harm perpetrated. Likewise, preaching the whole counsel of God will eventually bring us full (and whole) churches. As we shall see shortly, it works both ways, curse for curse and blessing for blessing. Other examples can be easily illustrated. Materialism has captured America. Should we then be surprised when people are treated like dirt?

Those who kill babies in the womb, kill their own future. Unless they can steal our children (and they are trying), then their names will die out within one generation.

Fathers who are too busy to give proper attention to their children will oftentimes find themselves alone when they grow old. You didn't give them any time when you were young. Don't be surprised if they don't give you any time when they are young and you are old. What goes around comes around.

When you destroy other people, do not be surprised when other people destroy you. When your tongue is like an unquenchable fire, don't be surprised when the tongues of others will burn your own ears as they speak to your friends about you. If you gossip about others, they are probably right now gossiping about you. What goes around comes around. If

you sinfully divide a church, then God may very well divide you. You may live the rest of your life with a tug of war in your own conscience. Division for division comes to men as well "eye for eye, or tooth for tooth."

Pre-millennialists (a-millennialists as well) saw defeat in the future of our culture. This was a lack of faith on their part. They saw defeat, and God gave it to them. Look at our culture today, and you see a defeated culture given to those who have a defeated faith.

Pietism gave the world over to unbelievers, and the church became irrelevant. Pietists have reaped what they sowed in the future. The church as a whole is as irrelevant in the modern culture as a blacksmith in Detroit during the height of the automobile industry. What goes around comes around. On the other hand, just think where our culture would be today if during the last century the whole counsel of God had been preached with a Biblical world and life view, looking for the victory of Christ in days ahead! Hope and faith would have been rewarded with blessing from God.

Also, along this line, it is interesting how the Bible associates such a close connection between men's false hopes and how God reacts in response to those hopes. In Psalm 115 the psalmist proceeds to describe the impotence of false gods, and concludes in verse 8 that "those who make them are like them, so is everyone who trusts in them." God has so ordered his providence that men will often reflect the characteristics of their idols. They will even begin to look like them. You may very well become what you love in this world. Idols eventually consume you and you take on their attributes. How many young people wear Jordan tennis-shoes just because they are trying to look like their idol?

Before I conclude this article, I need to mention three other points. Already, I hope the reader sees the divine threat of receiving in kind the penalty which results from the crime or sin perpetrated. This ought to make us all fear God more than we ever have before. It ought to make us pursue holiness and to mourn over our own sin. You are not exempt! Examine yourself to see if you are reaping what you have sown in kind in the lives of others!

The Sovereignty of God

However, we must also be careful to remember that God is sovereign and oftentimes we may suffer much, and it may be presumptuous to associate all suffering with the principle of "what goes around comes around." God has various reasons for causing men to suffer different trials. It may be wise to examine yourself to see if your malady is identical with a sin committed against another. Yet, we must also remember, that what we suffer may not always be a penalty in kind for some particular sin.

The Rewards of God

Second, it is important to remember that this principle of "what goes around comes around" has also a positive aspect, as I mentioned previously. As curse may be returned for curse, the Scriptures also teach that blessing will be returned for blessing. Gentleness and patience given to others will come back to you

in the form of gentleness and patience from others: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy" (*Mt. 5:7*). If we do good unto others, then we should expect good to be done unto us. Generally, what we give is what we will receive. To love our brother in Christ is to build up a storehouse of love that will return to us in times of need. As a pastor I see this principle of blessing for blessing manifesting itself in the church all the time. In 2 Corinthians 9:6, Paul says, "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." Not only does lacking good works result in a life lacking real joy, but overflowing kindness will bring to you overflowing charity from others. Christ said in Luke 6:38, "Give, and it will be give to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

The Gospel of God

Thirdly, this principle can also help us to understand the gospel. In regard to justification by faith, this equity principle is not the basis for our relationship with God, or our hope for the future. As a matter of fact, it is just the opposite. In terms of our justification, what goes around does *not* come around. Christ himself takes the penalty for our sin, and he guarantees our future free from the final condemnation of God. This is the good news, that what we should justly expect from God we will not suffer, because Christ became our substitute and the penalty of our sins was laid upon him.

In conclusion, as we hold onto the hope we have in Christ in being justified by faith, we still must remember that the equity of God's justice is still operative in this world as we deal with other people on a daily basis. We can generally expect to get back what we give. Paul wrote to the Galatians and said,

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

It is true that "what goes around comes around." This is not just good material for a popular movie. It is not just a proverbial saying captured by men living under the common grace of God. It is not natural law. This is the evidence of God's justice exhibited in the judicial laws of the Old Testament, and executed in his providence both in history and in the modern day. To God be the glory for both his justice and mercy.

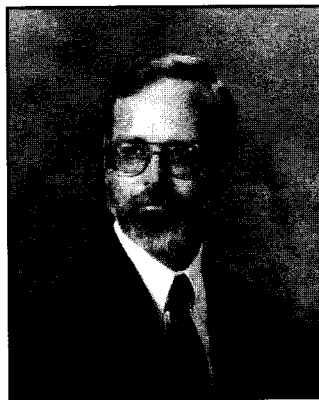
Larry E. Ball is pastor of Birdwell Heights Presbyterian Church, Kingsport, Tennessee, and a graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary. He can be contacted at 423-288-3664 or wppca@preferred.com.

Theonomy and Confession: A Review and Report

By *Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr.*

Martin A. Foulner, "Theonomy and the Westminster Confession." 64 pp., Edinburgh: Marpet Press, 1997. \$4.50. Available from Chalcedon.

Review of a Must-Have Book



Here is the book I have longed for—the book I myself long yearned to compile. Martin Foulner provides for us a remarkable compendium of statements from the Westminster divines (and others) showing without doubt that they were theonomic in their political and social ethic. Page after page, quote after quote, the evidence mounts: Like it or not, the theologians

who wrote the Westminster Standards—including WCF 19:4—held strong convictions about the continuing applicability of Mosaic Law in the modern world. This book single-handedly stops the debate over the historical and confessional nature of theonomy. Thank you, Mr. Foulner.

"Theonomy and the Westminster Confession" grew out of a 1996 overture to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland. That overture called upon the church to declare theonomy a heresy. The charges against theonomy were paraded in Scottish newspapers with such outrageous headlines as: "In Scotland a deacon wants to stone 'bad' kids to death" (*Sunday Mail*, November 17, 1996, p. 15). Below the title was a picture of the late Greg Bahnsen (though it never mentioned he had never stoned one child!). The overture passed, despite the refusal to interact with theonomists within the denomination. After the resolution passed another newspaper, *The Scotsman* (May 12, 1997) published the following headline: "Warning on Religious Extremists: Fundamentalists have infiltrated Scotland, says report to Free Church." The fears about theonomy were typical: emotional frenzy parading as dispassionate contemplation (quite a task!).

Foulner notes in his Preface: "I have made no attempt to argue for the theonomic position on theological or Scriptural grounds. It is the sole purpose of this work to show that the teachings of this movement are not new, but were widely held among Reformed theologians; particularly the Puritans at the Westminster Assembly." Consequently, the reader interested in the history of this debate will find Foulner's work an extremely helpful contribution. Unfortunately, for those who detest theonomy, theonomists wrote the Confession! And as Meredith

Kline noted twenty years ago: The American revisions of the Confession did not remove what he called “the Chalcedon error” from the Standards.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the anti-theonomy crusade in American Presbyterian circles (particularly within my own PCA) is the schizophrenic nature of the attack. Almost invariably the opponents of theonomy are “loose subscriptionists” regarding the Confession. This allows them to be charismatic, function as if congregationalists, deny six-day creation, and so forth while they pretend they are faithful to Presbyterian principles. Yet when it comes to criticism of theonomy, they switch principles and become “strict subscriptionists.” They then argue that the WCF 19:4 clearly disallows theonomy. The transformation is a sight to behold. It is as remarkable as it is complete. Unfortunately, it is only temporary: as soon as the theonomy debate is over, “loose subscription” becomes the name of the game. They experience *deja vu* and amnesia at the same time.

This famous section of the Confession reads: “To them [Israel] also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.” Not realizing that this is the theonomic principle, anti-theonomists rejoice over this statement. But what theonomist would say we literally have to build a parapet around the roof our house? Or are obliged to stone to death convicted capital criminals? Yet we hold that the underlying principle—the equity within—still prevails. But back to Foulner’s remarkable work.

Foulner preserves all the original spellings, punctuation, and emphases as found in his sources. This makes for difficult reading, but it provides us with the unadulterated source material we need. Theonomic statements are published from such Westminster signatories as George Gillespie (who sounds like Greg Bahnsen on Matthew 5:17), Samuel Rutherford (whose name adorns John Whitehead’s anti-theonomic Christian civil advocacy group), Jeremiah Burroughs, Herbert Palmer, William Reyner, Richard Vines, Thomas Hodges, and Philip Nye. Over 25% of the quotations are taken from Gillespie and Rutherford. Foulner called me not long after I ordered the book. He told me he had many more quotations to add to the next edition. I can’t wait.

Many other theologians from the Puritan era are brought forward showing they hold theonomic sympathies. Men such as David Dickson, James Fergusson, James Durham, George Hutcheson, John Brown of Wamphray, Nathaniel Hardy, Thomas Gilbert, Alexander Shields, and many more. Even the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Parliament are shown to be theonomic (1640s)! Of course, many outside of the Presbyterian debate have long recognized that Reformed theology has long had theonomic tendencies. For example, Michael Dennis Gabbert’s doctoral dissertation in church history from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary ably shows that Calvin, Cromwell, and the Massachusetts Civil Bay Colony were theonomic: “An Historical Evaluation of Christian Reconstructionism Based on the Inherent Inviability of Selected Theocratic Models” (1991).

The title clearly indicates his lack of sympathy for the Christian Reconstructionist model: his is not a sympathetic defense of theonomy!

I especially enjoyed the various discussions by the divines on the “equity” of God’s Law. These are tremendously important for fleshing out their theonomic commitments in light of WCF 19:4 (see pages 21, 25n, 29, 40–41, 45, 54, 57, 59). Also helpful are the clarifications of the judicial, moral, and ceremonial distinctions within the law. The divisions are not what so many think. But you will have to contact Chalcedon and order Foulner’s book to see what I mean! In addition, the several statements arguing for a New Testament confirmation of the Law are real eye-openers.

Be aware, however, that modern theonomic sympathies themselves will recoil at some of the positions of the Westminster divines: they “out-theonomize” us! Perhaps we are too Americanized.

This book is a real “must have” for theonomists. It ought to be owned, read, and used by all those who love God’s Law, the Reformed Faith, and the ministry of the Word.

Theonomy and the Confession of Faith

(1) Presbyterian ecclesiastics effectively play into our hands when they ask that we read Meredith Kline’s review of *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*. Kline admits that the original Westminster Confession actually taught theonomy and that the American revised version continues many of those strands. Kline notes: “Ecclesiastical courts operating under the Westminster Confession of Faith are going to have their problems, therefore, if they should be of a mind to bring the Chalcedon aberration under their judicial scrutiny” (p. 173). Kline states: “If, providentially, anything good is to come of the Chalcedon disturbance, perhaps, paradoxically, it will come from the very embarrassment given to churches committed to the Westminster standards by the relationship that can be traced, as noted above, between the Chalcedon position and certain ideas expressed in the Westminster Confession. Perhaps the shock of seeing where those ideas lead in Chalcedon’s vigorous development of them may make the church face up to the problem posed by the relevant formulations and reconsider the Confessions position on these points. . . .” Interestingly, Presbyterian Church in America teaching elder and New Testament scholar R. Laird Harris has critiqued theonomy in Covenant Seminary’s *Presbyterian Covenant Seminary Review* (Spring 1979), p. 1: In his second paragraph he noted of theonomy: “The view is not really new; it is just new in our time. It was the usual view through the Middle Ages, was not thrown over by the Reformers, and was espoused by the Scottish Covenanters who asked the Long Parliament to make Presbyterianism the religion of the three realms—England, Scotland and Ireland.”

(2) One of the leading Westminster divines was George Gillespie. He not only voted for the Westminster Confession of Faith; he helped write it. In William H. Hetherington’s *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (1856) we read of Gillespie that he “became one of the most prominent members of that August assembly, although the youngest man and

minister of the whole" (p. 400). "He took an equally active and influential part in the framing of the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, which embodied the doctrinal decisions of the Assembly" (p. 401). He speaks of Gillespie's "special eminence" in the production of Assembly papers (p. 401). In Gillespie's *Wholesome Severity Reconciled with Christian Liberty* he writes:

"(2) Christ's words (*Mt. 5:17*), Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill, are comprehensive of the judicial law, it being a part of the law of Moses. Now he could not fulfill the judicial law, except either by his practice, or by teaching others still to observe it; not by his own practice, for he would not condemn the adulteress (*Jn. 8:11*), nor divide the inheritance (*Lk. 12:13-14*). Therefore it must be by his doctrine for our observing it.

"(3) If Christ in his sermon (*Mt. 5*), would teach that the moral law belongs to us Christians, in so much as he vindicates it from the false glosses of the scribes and Pharisees; then he meant to hold forth the judicial law concerning moral trespasses as belonging unto us also; for he vindicates and interprets the judicial law, as well as the moral (*Mt. 5:38*), An eye for an eye, etc.

"(4) If God would have the moral law transmitted from the Jewish people to the Christian people; then he would also have the judicial laws transmitted from the Jewish Magistrate to the Christian Magistrate: there being the same reason of immutability in the punishments, which is in the offenses" (in Christopher Coldwell, ed., *Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature*, pp. 182-183).

Do Gillespie's statements sound as if modern theonomists would be disbarred from courts operating under a Confession he helped write?

(3) In addition, the most important Reformed published response to theonomy is Will Barker and Robert Godfrey, ed., *Theonomy: An Informed Critique* (Zondervan, 1990). Though it disagrees with theonomy, it does not condemn it as heretical; it even allows that a very theonomic-type of ethic is in the Confession. Note the following excerpts.

In *Theonomy: An Informed Critique* church historian Sinclair Ferguson writes, "Essentially, Bahnsen accepts the doctrinal orthodoxy of the original text [of the Confession]. Whether or not this is in conflict with the intention of the American Presbyterian emendation of the Confession, it is certainly in keeping with the traditional Scottish Reformed understanding of it" (pp. 323-324). "It cannot be doubted that mainstream Puritanism did believe that the death penalty was applicable to crimes other than murder. In several instances, therefore, its practical outworking and that of theonomy are one" (p. 334). His strongest position statement is: "We have already noted that many seventeenth-century Puritans favored a closer approximation to the Mosaic judicial statutes and appealed to Old Testament texts to confirm their views. But we have also stressed that this position is not necessarily identical with that of theonomy" (p. 339). "Not necessarily"?

Ferguson goes on to say: "No single position on every aspect of the doctrine of the law was held by the Divines at Westminster. They represented a variety of hues within a conservative spectrum, on many doctrines, and specifically on

the doctrine of the law of God. Hence their protracted and difficult discussions. Here, as elsewhere, part of their genius lay in their ability to state doctrines clearly, yet not so narrowly as to exclude brethren among themselves who likewise were committed to generic Calvinism. Their response to Parliament's demand for proof-texts, the known theological diversity among the commissioners, and indications in the minutes that they themselves were prepared to express things in an accommodating fashion all suggest that Chapter XIX is a fine example of their Reformed inclusivism. It would have satisfied those Divines, like Gillespie, who wished that more attention would be given to the Mosaic penology; it satisfied others who did not believe that the Mosaic penology as such was necessarily binding, in all of its details, though the Mosaic proscriptions generally speaking were" (pp. 345-46).

Ferguson: "It should be noted that in many instances the practical implications of theonomy may not necessarily be a denial of the teaching of the Westminster Confession. The words of Chapter XIX, iv can be understood to include the view that the Mosaic penalties may be applied by the Christian magistrate (if "general equity" so dictates). We have already noted that such views were widespread among the Divines in relation to specific crimes. But this is simply to recognize that there may be common ground in practice between the Confession's teaching and theonomy" (pp. 346-47).

Again, Ferguson: "In light of this, and the considerations above, I conclude that the Confession does not expound, nor does it prescribe, a theonomic viewpoint. It may be that some members of the Assembly were prepared to stretch the meaning of 'general equity' as far as contemporary theonomists do. . . . The strongest position a theonomist could adopt on the basis of the Confession would be that it did not *a priori* reject the application of the Mosaic judicial punishment for crimes considered seriatim. But theoretical theonomy as such is not the teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith" (p. 348).

Tremper Longman in *Theonomy: An Informed Critique*: "The above criticisms should not be taken as a complete rejection of theonomy's insight into the law and its penalties. . . . We can be grateful to theonomy for forcing the church to take these issues seriously" (p. 54).

In the introductory note to the conclusion of *Theonomy: An Informed Critique*, Will Barker (a PCA church historian and former General Assembly moderator) and Robert Godfrey write: "Although this volume is a critique of theonomy, several of the chapters have concluded on a positive note of appreciation for what the theonomists have contributed to our understanding of God's law" (p. 385).

D. Clair Davis, a PCA church historian and a non-theonomist, writing in the same work: "Theonomy can be of great service precisely within the context of the constitution of the American republic" (p. 392). On page 393 he writes: "Only creeds . . . can define the priorities and direction of a denomination. If that is correct, and if no church has adopted explicit creeds for or against theonomy, then by definition no one can regard himself threatened by those who do not concur with his evaluation of the movement." "It is easy to argue that the Westminster Confession's commitment to the general equity

of Old Testament law provides ample justification for theonomic clarification of that equity” (p. 394). He further notes:

What is the purpose of a theological examination of a ministerial candidate in a presbytery? There is not one, but two: to determine the candidate’s doctrinal orthodoxy and also to determine his theological competence, his ability to show that he can think theologically. Presbyteries may not always be clear about when they are serving which purpose. They may always inquire into questions that require insight into theonomic issues, as a way of testing competence. But they may not require a particular application of the general equity of Old Testament law as a criterion of doctrinal orthodoxy within the system of doctrine. This must be case, for both pro- and anti-theonomists. If that distinction proves too difficult to maintain, probably it is the path of wisdom to forego examination in these areas. (p. 395)

(4) Ronald Nash, a Reformed theologian at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, writes in *Great Divides*: “For one thing, the people called theonomists don’t appear to be dangerous. Efforts to show that they are dangerous do more, I suspect, to dishonor the people raising the charges” (p. 176).

Familiar Case Law Objections: Deuteronomy 13

The Deuteronomy 13 law does not mandate capital punishment of non-believers and members of false religions. It must be understood in terms of its Biblical and historical context. First, it should be noted at the outset that the framing of the law in Deuteronomy 13 has in view solicitation and seduction to idolatry (*Dt. 13:2, 6, 13*). It does not have in mind personal unbelief or even personal rejection of faith in Jehovah God. Those who mistakenly assume that this law would inevitably draw the state sword into church discipline for unbelief are mistaken. In fact, unbelief in Israel was not punishable by death. For one to refuse to be circumcised (an expression of unbelief, cf. *Lev. 26:41; Dt. 30:6; Jer. 9:25-26; Ez. 44:7*) meant that he was “cut off” from the religious community (*Gen. 17:14*). He was excluded from the worship in Israel (*Ex. 12:48; Eze. 44:7, 9*); he was not executed.

Second, in Deuteronomy 13, we have what in essence is the framing of a law against treason. This is evident on the basis of the following three-staged consideration: (1) By the very nature of the case, the god of a society is that society’s source of law (see R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* [Fairfax, VA: Thoburn, 1971]). It has been thus in the fallen world since the temptation of Eve to be as “God” by “knowing” (determining, legislating) good and evil (*Gen. 3:5*). Hence, the pagan tendency for political rulers to be deified, as illustrated in the Babylonian king (*Is. 14:4, 13-14*) and the Roman emperor (*Mt. 22:15-22; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:4ff*). Hegel clothed this pagan conception in modern dress: “The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth.” To seek another god, therefore, is to turn from the Law of the present God, Jehovah, which Law was the constitutional basis of the nation of Israel.

(2) The context preceding Deuteronomy 13 speaks of the

gods of the nations around Israel. It speaks of nations serving their gods: “When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise’” (*Dt. 12:29-30*). This leads me to note that:

(3) The Deuteronomic law is developed in such a way as to indicate the ultimate outcome of such apostasy. It is wholesale, treasonous rebellion against the lawful authority and integrity of the nation: “If you hear someone in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying, ‘Certain corrupt men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods, gods whom you have not known”’ (*Dt. 13:12-13*). As Craigie puts it: “In its implications, the crime would be equivalent to treason or espionage in time of war” (Peter Craigie, *Deuteronomy* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans], 222.). Thus, in a certain respect such a law was a right to “self-defense” for the nation, as was the right to wage defensive warfare.

Third, any perception of idolatry as a quietistic unbelief is wholly mistaken. The very nature of idolatry involved the ancient worshiper in a number of capital crimes. In fact, it is only in modern times that worship and faith could be separated from life and practice. Thus, the punishment for idolatry is a punishment for those particular crimes. As Mayes notes, Deuteronomy 12:29-32 is the “general introduction” to chapter 13 (A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, New Century Bible [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], p. 230). This “general introduction” clearly speaks of certain “abominable acts” of idol worshipers: “When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods” (*Dt. 12:30-31*).

Idolatry involved wide-scale criminal conduct and was a dangerous cancer (See *Lev. 18:21-30; Rom. 1:21-32. 1 Cor. 10:20* shows the connection with Satan worship). The Canaanites were not thrust out of the land for unbelief, but for wholesale moral and criminal perversion (*Lev. 18:3, 24ff; 20:23; Dt. 9:5; 18:9-12*). That idolatry was a real danger is evident in the days of Israel’s apostasy, when abominable acts were committed (*2 Kgs. 16:3; 21:6; 23:10*). All nations served idols in those days (*2 Kgs. 17:29*). Israel fell right in with them and with their grossly immoral crimes (*2 Kgs. 17:7ff, 17-19*), thus corrupting and subverting the moral fiber of their culture by legalizing child sacrifice, bestiality, homosexual conduct, cult prostitution, and the like.

Thus, as we have seen, the apostasy laws of God’s law are not laws against mere unbelief or against misguided worship. Those laws were designed to protect the legal integrity of the

nation (criminalizing such actions as treason, conspiracy, seditious revolt, and espionage) and to bring judgment against wicked idolatry (criminalizing such actions as cultural subversion and public mayhem). The false prophet in Deuteronomy 13:5 is not just a foolish mouther of error, but is a focus point for agitating the masses to rebellion. The prophets of Israel "demanded that same obedience to their words as was due to the Law of God," E. J. Young, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 34. The false prophets would tend to mirror the cultural function of the true prophets, and were, thus, dangerous as conspirators.

Deuteronomy 21. Often anti-theonomists will bring up Deuteronomy 21:18-21 as a horrible example of the danger of theonomy. Be sure to get clear as to what the questioner of theonomy is saying. Is he saying that this law is so obviously horrendous that it should self-evidently not be practiced today? Often, that is the tone of the question; the mere quoting of this law is deemed to evidence the absurdity of theonomy. If this is the approach taken, you should note: (1) This was, in fact, a part of God's Law revealed by God to Moses. Would we be able to defend the integrity of Scripture against the secularist who points to this law as cruel. Whether or not it remains valid today, for those who hold to the inspiration of Scripture, it was valid in the Old Testament era. We need to be careful that we not quote God's Law in a mocking manner. (2) This law calls for capital punishment of rebellious children and was re-affirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 15:3-6. Not only does he not mock this law, but he appears to reaffirm its validity.

In addition, the following may be added for those who are careful not to laugh at the "absurdity" of God's Law: (1) The modern anti-theonomic interpreter does not really understand the law, if he applies it to ten-year-olds who do not take out the garbage. It very obviously does not speak of minor children. It speaks of a situation so dangerous that the parents have lost control over their son, who does not respond to their chastening. He is evidently a danger to them and to society. (2) In fact, he is such a danger that his own parents seek his capital punishment! This obviously is a grievous situation, in that parents normally seek to protect their children, not seek to bring criminal charges of a capital nature against them! (3) The "general equity" of this law is at least three-fold: (a) It provides principles regarding incorrigible criminality. Such a person is a repeat offender, who is so bad that his own parents seek his death. (b) It denies the right of parents to exercise capital punishment themselves (the state has to do it). (c) It illustrates procedural guidelines for capital cases. Criminals must be brought to civil authorities ("elders sitting in the gates"); the civil authorities must pass the judgment and oversee the execution.

John 8:1-11. This passage does not repeal the law against adultery. Notice several facts:

(1) This seems to have been a frame-up. The woman's accusers claim to have caught her "in the act" of adultery. Where is the man? It takes two to act out adultery.

(2) Jesus never says not to stone her.

(3) Jesus never indicates the law is invalid.

(4) Actually Jesus actually demands the full application of the procedural aspects of the law. When he says "Let he who is without guilt cast the first stone," he was requiring the procedures found in God's law: (a) Deut. 19:15 and (2) Lev. 17:17. These texts say the witnesses should not be guilty of the crime and that the witnesses should have a hand in the punishment. This is a safety feature to secure the integrity of the witnesses: would a false witness be as willing to testify against a man if he was going to engage in the actual punishment?

(5) But if Jesus did repeal the law against adultery (which he did not), it would be God speaking in his word who repealed it, not we ourselves. If John 8 is an example of the repealing of a criminal punishment law, then the method of proving the repeal of such a law is theonomic, that is, it is God's word that is determinative, not the U. S. Constitution, the pluralistic culture will live in, the passing of time, etc.

Random Observations

The idea of general equity is clearly necessitated by time-bound, culture-oriented applications of case laws in the Old Testament. Theonomy does not require the erection of a fence on the roof today, because we no longer entertain guests on our houses. But the general equity of the law remains: we are obliged to provide a safe environment for our guests. Theonomy does not require stoning as the means of capital punishment today. Death by lethal injection or electrocution would be a general equitable application of the judicial response to capital crimes. Theonomy does not require that we await a literal ox in a ditch or a straying ass (*Dt. 22:1*) before we are obliged by God to help our neighbor in preventing the loss or damage of his property. On and on we could go, in both the Old and New Testaments. The idea of general equity is necessary to bring first century New Testament laws and principles into the twentieth century. For instance, we do not have to wait for a Jew to be beaten and robbed before we are obligated to be a "good Samaritan."

There is some hard work to be done in discerning ceremonial from judicial laws (levirate and Jubilee, etc.). Theonomists do not claim they have all the answers, though they feel that have a system that can reduce the number of complications in ethical discourse.

Never forget that the "jot and tittle" language upon which the Law's abiding validity in "exhaustive detail" is based, is Jesus's statement, not theonomists'. We have to account for his statement in some way; theonomy believes it has found the means.

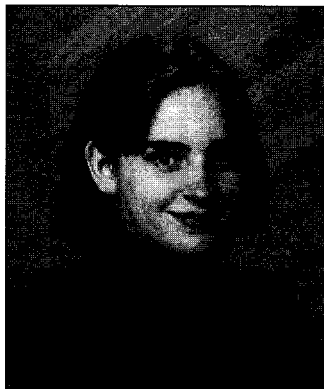
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Liberty Under God

By Jessica Ferroni

So I shall keep Thy Law continually for ever and ever.
And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts.

Ps. 119:44,45



Though obedience to the law may appear outwardly to be the antithesis of liberty, Reconstructionist Christians realize that liberty comes from God alone, and obedience to his revealed word. It has been proven time and again throughout history that the nation or people that obey God's law have been granted abundant blessings, while the

nation that shies away from the truth becomes increasingly restricted in its freedoms. One example of such a nation is our own United States, which, as she moves farther and farther away from God's law, has become a place of restricted liberty and blatant, unrepentant sin. Sinful man believes liberty is the self-defined freedom to do whatever he desires; however, this is a humanistic idea, the outworking of man's fallen nature and desire to be his own god, determining for himself good and evil (*Gen. 3:5*). Pagan Americans believe they are free from bondage because America is a "free" country, but they do not realize that freedom must be defined by God.

Liberty: Freedom to Sin?

The meaning of the word *liberty* has become so distorted in today's society that most Americans have difficulty comprehending what liberty actually constitutes. Everyone wants his "rights," but few realize that rights (*i.e.*, liberties), are defined by God's law. Consider the sign displayed prominently outside a pornography shop our church is currently involved in picketing:

... Please do not harass the picketers. It is their Constitutional right to picket, just as it is our right to do business.

The pornographers are hiding behind a man-made law while loudly proclaiming that what they're doing is perfectly legal. It's a sad fact to note that most of the modern church agrees with them! As long as these public sinners stay "out there," outside the four walls of the church, it is supposedly their right to do whatever they please, and we who publicly oppose them are infringing upon their "rights." But why are we opposed to pornography? Why can't we live side by side

with the pornographers in peace? Because there will be no peace where there is pornography! Pornography is a proven prelude to rape, murder, and child abuse; more importantly, it is a sin forbidden by God. Because it is sin, if society continues to tolerate—and encourage—this abhorrence, society will be judged, resulting in a restriction on liberties for all. Any attempt to achieve freedom apart from God's law will result in loss of true freedom, bondage to sin, and consequent judgment from Heaven.

Legality vs. Lawfulness

Efforts to breach the Creator/creation distinction fill our legal system as man attempts to become God and his own master. The Bill of Rights has become so badly misinterpreted as to allow pornography shops to line the streets and continue to function without any fear of civil government's intervention or censorship.

But the fact that pornography is legal in our land does not make it lawful—in other words, even though pornography is permitted in our current legal system, it is still a violation of God's law, and thus is sin.

Many other legalized abhorrences also are not lawful; for example, the abortion industry. Feeble attempts to justify this state-permitted practice by claiming it to be a woman's legal right in no way make it any less the murder of an innocent child and a violation of God's Law.

Liberty: Freedom from Sin

Ezra was commanded by God to set godly magistrates, "all such as know the laws of thy God" (*Ex. 7:25*). Those who live under the law are expected to obey it, and the magistrates and judges that are commanded to know the law of God are to adhere to its principles and set the society's standards by them. The Christian society, then, would have no pornography (a violation of the Seventh Commandment) or abortion (a violation of the Sixth Commandment), and criminals would be required to make restitution for all illegal acts. The result of a godly Christian society is freedom for its law-abiding citizens from the effects of sins such as tyranny and bureaucracy.

Christian Liberty and Righteousness

"Considering the Creator only a Being of infinite power, He was able unquestioningly to have prescribed whatever laws He pleased to His creature, man, however unjust or severe. But as he is also a Being of infinite wisdom, He has laid down only such laws as were founded in those religions of justice, that existed in the nature of things antecedent to any positive precept. These are the eternal, immutable laws of good and evil, to which the Creator Himself in all his Dispensations conforms; and which he has enabled human reason to discover, so far as they are necessary for the conduct of human actions" (William Blackstone, *Commentaries*, 1765).

As man is a creature, he must inherently adhere to the Laws of his Creator. Any attempt to define liberty from a humanistic, autonomous perspective results in man-centered "rights" taking precedence over divinely revealed law. Humanity is not able

(because of sin) to determine what is right and wrong. This is why we have Biblically revealed law. To obey is life, peace, and freedom. To attempt to replace God's law with man's (*i.e.*, to disobey) is to invite negative sanctions and suffer in bondage to sin.

Righteousness will reign where evil is suppressed by godly magistrates; where there is an active orthodox church; and good, godly families stand for the truth.

Conclusion

The essential key to understanding Christian liberty is realizing the difference between obedience to God's Laws, "theonomy," and sinful rebellion against God, "autonomy." Consider what Paul says in Romans 8:2-4:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

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Post-Homeschool Life

By Carol Willis



Much has been published about homeschooling: how to start, why to do it, how to do it, etc. But now that some of us have graduated our last child, not much is available to help us find our way in post-homeschool life. We are older than we were, but much too young to be put out to pasture. Where do we go from here, since our identities are no longer as homeschooling mothers?

I see the two main tasks facing us "mid-life moms" as 1) finding God's new direction for our lives and applying our energies and talents toward it, and 2) learning to let go of the children we have invested our lives in. This is the first of two essays on these issues, addressed primarily to home-educating moms, although I think they are applicable as well to all stay-at-home moms. The second essay follows.

Christian bookstores are full of advice for women, and have been for years. Homeschooling moms get a double whammy, if we add in all the home education conference and publishing superstars. It's easy to think that if we just follow what a particular author has to say, we can remove all guesswork from our lives and be godly women. But this is a false security. I have been through Anne Ortlund and her notebook. I have been through Bill Gothard and his Seven Basic Everythings. I have been through Mary Pride and her way home. And you know what? I still don't know God's plan for *my* life.

Several years ago I was asked what plans I had for when I finished homeschooling. My answer included something of having many interests to pursue and of desiring to remain "careerless" in order to be available to help and encourage younger women. But now I know that it isn't as simple as "... teaching the younger women." What does that mean? Where does it happen? When? What does God's general plan look like on me?

Our homeschool is empty now. I come to you, from the other side so to speak, not to whine, but to warn. Right now I feel that this is how I can help and encourage you. Please, full-time wives and moms, take some time to seriously think about the second half of your lives.

Most of us have chosen to remain at home, believing that was what God wanted us to do. Making homes, loving our husbands, training and nurturing our children have been our profession and our calling. We have endured condescension and criticism from many around us because we believed what we were doing was right.

But children grow up and life changes. I never thought I'd fall into the empty-nest syndrome. And I still don't think that describes what I've been going through. Oh, that's part of it, probably. It depends on how you define the term, I guess. But

I did not prepare properly for this transition into the next phase of life.

Besides, there is something in me bursting to get out. Individuality. Talent. Creativity. How God made me. His gifts and his image. And I'm having trouble knowing what to do with it. God is in the process of guiding me into his way for me. But sometimes that something in me feels terminally stuck.

God has made us with incredible variety, just like the flowers and birds. Consequently, our lives will not look the same. I'm in the process of figuring out what mine will look like from now on. God is sovereign over my life; he knows all the details of my future. But it's just unfolding to me. The paradox is that, given the above, he still holds me responsible for stewardship of what he has given me. That's the puzzle. That's what I can't help but think could have been thought out and planned for a little better than I have done.

I guess I could tell you that it is foolishness to ignore your passions, your individuality, in the name of submission and service. Yes, yes, I know, "He who loses his life for my sake shall find it." But I don't think these two concepts are contradictory. We are not homogenous lumps, and losing our lives for Christ's sake does not mean we should pretend to be. We began as lumps, but of what varied composition? And God has been sculpting us since our beginning.

So how can we prepare for the transition to post-child-raising life? I certainly am not the answer-lady; to a large extent we each have to do it our own way. But I do have a couple of ideas:

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the world besides your
children. Gasp! Is this heresy?
I don't think so.*

1) You are using your minds strenuously now in homeschooling, and will increasingly as your children grow. Plan to keep it up. What are your favorite subjects? What topics would you like to explore? Go for it. Make a list and head to the library. Take notes. Take classes. Ask questions.

2) You are passionate about your family and homeschooling? Plan for future passions. You will still be involved with your children, but it will be oh, so different, requiring different energies and much less time. Don't figure you will just relax and quilt (or crochet, or cross-stitch; you fill in the blank), unless that is your passion. I love to quilt, but it isn't enough. What moves you? What expresses you? What do you feel you must do or you will go mad? Find a way to do it. Unless it is a sinful thing, God wants you to do it for some reason, if you are delighting in him.

I was at the point where these types of questions left me blank. That was very scary to me, as if I didn't exist. But I'm learning to listen, to notice when something hits me, bam!, like

a rift in time or an earthquake, or even when it's only like a caught second or a nearly imperceptible tremor. And I'm learning to look to the past sometimes for clues to the future. What did I used to enjoy? What was I good at B.F. (before family)? That me is still part of the present me. I can give myself permission to pursue some of those things again.

We in the evangelical community say lots of things about submission's not meaning a loss of individuality and about full-time home-making not being dull, unintelligent work. But how do we live it out? Frankly, one of my struggles since the end of my home-educating has been with feeling like a dull non-person wasting my intelligence. This is no one's fault but my own, because I have not been using me to the fullest potential intended by God, by my parents, and by my dear husband (who says at this point in our life that he just wants me to be happy with myself).

How do we make our words true? Again, I don't know entirely, but I have some clues:

1) Respect ourselves as redeemed creations of God. Through no effort or merit of our own, but through the great everything of and from God, we have great value. We have minds, talents, personality given by him. Set them free.

2) Realize that God gives us the desires of our hearts when we delight in him. This means that he gives us not the objects of our desires, but the very desires. These are things he wants us to do and says, "Go for it, with my blessing. I will use it. Trust me."

3) Remember that things will not always be as they are today. It may be hard to believe when you are telling the kids to pick up or stop fighting for the hundredth time, but you will some day be past this. Be thankful, be sad, be prudent for the future all at the same time.

4) You have something to offer the world besides your children. Gasp! Is this heresy? I don't think so. We should consider whether we really want our daughters to have the idea that their only worth to God is through their future children. I think that is a harmful attitude. So begin now to ask God to show you what he is equipping you to give. He might show you in advance, and he might not. My mother says she never had "dreams" or long-term goals. She just did what presented itself. She has been a blessing to many people even if she hasn't set out to make that her goal. But if your way doesn't present itself, seek God for it.

5) If you are married, work to keep your marriage vital. The adage is true; your husband will be there when the children are gone. Stay in touch. Keep discovering each other. Play together. Don't neglect your garden; cultivate it.

So this is the deal. Between God and me, I must live my life. Nobody else's. Just the one he's given me, as the person he's made me. You must do the same. I don't say this in defiance or pride, but as the way things must be to honor him and to preserve sanity. Authors like Bill Gothard and Mary Pride have some valuable things to teach us, but we mustn't walk lockstep as their clones. Something tells me they probably don't even want us to.

Hang onto your hats for the journey. (If you were buying a hat, what would it look like?)

Trusting God With Our Children

By Carol Willis

We try to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We want them to be like that tree planted by the rivers of waters, with deep roots in God. We aim to train them in the way they should go, so that when they are old they will not depart from it. God has told us to do this.

As home schoolers we are engaged in this task neck-deep. If we aren't careful, we focus our lives on this so much that it becomes our identity. If this is your identity, who are you when the job is done? It inevitably will be done, and rightly so.

As our kids start to think for themselves and make their own decisions, they may not choose in individual matters as we would for them. This is a natural thing, since they are individual creations of God. But if they think or do something which, though not unscriptural, we disagree with, we may feel threatened. It may feel like they are rejecting not only the teaching we have invested our lives in, but also our very selves.

We always have to trust God with our children, whether they are crossing the street on "... Rollerblade skates, ..." and "... a U-Haul trailer." This is a never-ending reality for parents. I've had babies, and I've had twenty-somethings; I'm still being tested in this. Letting go means trusting God to continue to work in the life of the adult child that you have raised with his help.

We are still growing, and our parents aren't micromanaging our lives. Now it's our turn to stand back and watch the process in our grown children. But that is especially hard to do if our own identity is too closely wrapped up in our kids. Then we have more at stake than their well-being, and we have burdened our kids with more than they were ever meant to carry.

Parents sometimes witness lapses in wisdom in their older children. I'm 47, and I suspect that my mother sometimes sees lapses of wisdom in me. But she usually says nothing or very little. I think that's partly because she realizes it doesn't come all at once, and partly because she knows I won't "get it" until I live through it. Here I have a secret to tell: The older I get, the less wise I feel. Maybe part of the wisdom that's supposed to come with age is in the humility that accompanies finding out how little you really have figured out. So, we see our grown children making less-than-ideal decisions, and therefore we oppose them. Wait a minute—are we giving them time and room to grow? Are we feeling threatened that they don't "think like us"?

Beyond the transmission of facts, what are the foundational goals of most home schooling parents? We want our children to glorify God and enjoy him forever. We want them to be men and women of godly character. We want them to be able to think for themselves. We must now allow them to do just that and to be accountable to God.

Another thought—I do not want the responsibility of making my grown kids' decisions. I am fallible. If I say they

must pursue this career path or marry that man, and things don't work out and they are miserable, I must bear that. No, thank you. It is painful enough to watch them struggle with hard times I had nothing to do with, without adding guilt that I pushed them into it.

And no matter how well we raise our kids, they will have some hard times. No matter what our instincts, we cannot shield them completely. Think about it. It's a common factor of human life. Unbelieving Ernest Hemingway observed that the world breaks us all, but that we grow strong in the broken places. This is part of God's educational program.

Carol Willis lives with her husband and nineteen-year-old son in Greeley, Colorado, where they attend Fellowship Christian Reformed Church. She teaches supplemental classes in language and writing to homeschool students one day a week. Carol was a homeschooling mom for nine and a half years. The Willises are parents of three and grandparents of four. Carol can be reached at 919 13th Ave., Greeley, Colorado 80631.

The Committee for Biblical Principles in Government

Compiled by Dr. John Shaw

As our society drifts farther from sound Biblical truths in government, more and more Christians see the need to conform our laws to Biblical standards. This is a difficult task, not only because of the lack of consensus in society, but because even we Christians are often ignorant of the extensive teaching present in the Scripture. Reconstructionists are certainly more knowledgeable than most Christians, but even so, it takes time, effort, and discussion to translate Biblical specifics into practical laws for our day. And often, those who rise to the task find it a lonely one. What is needed is a way to educate larger numbers of Christians in this important area.

In recent years there have been a number of excellent materials published pertaining to the application of Biblical principles to government. Some of these include foundational works such as Bahnsen's *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, Rushdoony's *Institutes of Biblical Law* and other more study-oriented works such as DeMar's three-volume set on *God and Government*. I am pleased to report that now The Committee for Biblical Principles in Government has printed several Bible studies which are suitable for Sunday School classes, small groups and individual use. The first of these, *The Challenge of Godly Government*, includes twelve chapters covering family, church and state, the Constitution, pluralism, education, taxation and others. The second, *The Challenge of Godly Justice*, includes twelve chapters covering the nature of justice, the

purpose of government, ministers of justice, civil disobedience, capital punishment, and ecclesiastical justice. Leaders' guides are available for each Bible study.

The development of these studies grew from the efforts of a small group of people with a vision. The Committee for Biblical Principles in Government had its roots in The Tualatin Valley Prayer and Information Chain, started by Mrs. Frances Rath in 1986. The prayer chain, involving about 25 churches, focused on issues of the day mostly on a local level. It distributed educational bulletin inserts on the Biblical role of government written by Pastor Dennis Tuuri of Reformation Covenant Church in Portland, Oregon.

Over time, the Lord gave Mrs. Rath a burden to educate legislators in the Biblical principles of government. She approached me, as head elder of our church, Reformation Bible Church, and we began organizing the Committee. In 1993 we incorporated as a non-profit educational organization with the express purpose of producing educational materials promoting the application of Biblical understanding and practice in government. I served as President and Chairman of the Board and reviewer. Mrs. Rath served as secretary, treasurer, author and compiler. Legal work was provided pro-bono by a local Christian lawyer. Mrs. Rath organized a team of reviewers and we went to work.

The same year, 1993, the Committee published "Biblical References for Legislators," a 500-page, loose-leaf compilation of Scripture, articles and bibliographic references. It included chapters entitled "Capital Punishment," "Government, Education," and "Homosexuality and Life Issues." We distributed 14 manuals to legislators as gifts paid for by donations. Another 20 were purchased by pastors and 41 by Christian activists. Thirteen of these people were educators and lecturers of notable ability. Many of these customers and supporters knew nothing of Christian Reconstruction, but just the same, they believed that God's word holds the answers, even for government.

A year and a half later, the Committee realized that these books were too big, too expensive and too intimidating. We desired something targeted to a much wider audience. Small booklets could introduce material a step at a time and challenge users to study Reconstruction and other materials on their own. Our vision was growing from one of educating legislators to educating the electorate.

We began field testing *The Challenge of Godly Government* in 1995. These lessons consist of Scriptures, questions and essays excerpted from Gary DeMar, Charles Colson, John Eidsmoe, David Barton, Robert Dabney and others. In a bold move, Oregon State Representative Charles Starr and unofficial legislative chaplain Pastor Frank Carpenter, both members of our board, began using this study in a class for legislators and capitol staff. With very encouraging results and enthusiasm on the part of those attending, we printed 2,000 copies. They were picked up for distribution by Great Christian Books, the Christian Supply chain of eight stores around Portland, and Westminster Theological Seminary bookstores in Escondido and San Diego, California. Steve Walker, Elder at Immanuel's Reformed Church, had this to say about the class he field tested:

I used the booklet in an adult Sunday school class of about 30 people at Immanuel in Salem during the year

1995. Even though many were politically active they did not always understand the Biblical rationale for their involvement. These lessons caused the class members to discuss from Scripture God's approach to economics, taxation, worldviews and much more. A single lesson often went several weeks due to the excellent discussions provoked by these materials. At the end of the series the class had a very good grasp of the difference between conservative and Biblical thinking in government.

Next, the Committee began work on *The Challenge of Godly Justice*. Representative Starr again field tested with another class in the 1997 session. Two study groups evolved and Pastor Mike O'Brien joined as the second moderator. These classes were visited off and on by as many as 50 leaders and activists in positions of influence. They finished the session in six months with 8 legislators, 6 legislative assistants, 11 lobbyists, the Oregon Director of the AFL-CIO and a local pastor. Representative Lynn Snodgrass, House Majority Leader commented:

The study prompted good participation and communication. It was a great resource and strong reinforcement for Biblical principles in government.

Jim Lockwood, Legislative Liaison to the Oregon Department of Corrections, a regular attendee, said of the study booklet:

Have you prayerfully considered how the law of the Old Testament and the grace of the New Testament meld to give God's direction on such tough issues as capital punishment, restitution to crime victims and qualifications for the elections of leaders? Is current practice in opposition to the foundations of America's original justice system? *The Challenge of Godly Justice* will serve as your guide to these and many other issues. It will help you be a better citizen not only of this great country, but of His Kingdom as well!

Representative Starr noted that the section on the Biblical approach to crime and punishment provoked considerable discussion and led to a much deeper understanding of the problems of our justice system today. Students were visibly distressed over how far America has strayed from God's intentions. (One legislative student attended a Reconstruction conference and "loaded up" with Rushdoony, and other greats—obviously determined to re-educate herself.) Another tremendous benefit was the resulting prayer support among legislators. Prayer for issues arising during the week became a regular part of the class meetings, a new development observed by Starr.

The Committee is currently working on *The Challenge of Godly Citizenship*, which should be in field testing by the end of this year.

The development of these studies continues to be a team effort. Presently a dozen committed volunteers from as many different churches, including four pastors, are donating many hours to reviewing lessons with Mr. and Mrs. Rath. It is a great blessing to all of us to see a project of this sort bring together Christians from such diverse backgrounds. In a very real sense, we are able to repeat with the Psalmist "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97).

We have garnered endorsements from several nationally known individuals including former U. S. Congressman William

Dannemeyer, Rev. Peter J. Marshall, Rev. Marshall Foster and Rosalie Slater of the Foundation for American Christian Education. We are most grateful for their support and their promotion of these publications.

Determined to avoid any debt, the Committee has operated from its inception without any paid staff or board members, and no rented office space. Each publication has started with seed money from small donations, and then paid for itself in sales. This has enabled us to keep costs low and to remain debt free. As with any small non-profit organization, we are always looking for a benefactor, but we continue to fulfill our calling with the resources God has provided.

It is difficult to evaluate the impact of our ministry. Fortunately, God is in charge and oversees the whole program. We have seen this clearly as we work with other individuals, groups and ministries. God is at work in our land, including our government. By his grace, one day Christian principles shall again prevail across the face of America. It is our hope and our prayer that we may contribute to this in some small way.

Biographical notes:

Dr. John Shaw holds a Ph.D. in physics, owns and runs Shaw Technologies, Inc., a business providing digital signal processing consulting expertise to the Portland area, and is the primary teaching elder at Reformation Bible Church, a small Reconstructionist congregation in Aloha, Oregon. He continues to serve on the board of the Committee.

Representative Charles Starr, another board member, just finished his third term in the Oregon House of Representatives, where he served most recently on the Family Law and Civil Law subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee. He owns Starr Boys Garden Center and Charles Starr and Associates Roofing and Contracting. Chairman of the Board, Pastor Frank Carpenter, is Associate Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hillsboro and has been unofficial chaplain of the Oregon Legislature for ten years. Board member Frances Rath and her retired husband Dale Rath own a farm west of Portland and have served many years in Republican politics in Washington County.

Rev. Dennis Tuuri, a close associate of the Committee, has given invaluable assistance in the review and promotion of our booklets. He is pastor of Reformation Covenant Church and leads a Reconstructionist congregation of 35 families. He is founder and director of Parent's Education Association Political Action Committee, a lobbying group focusing primarily on home-schooling. He also directs state wide Reconstruction events called Geneva Conferences.

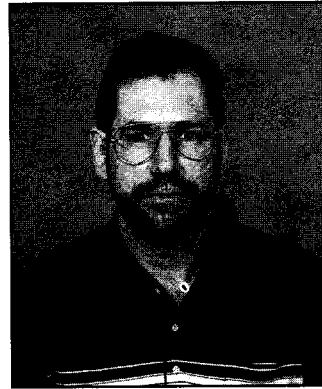
Other board members are Rev. Mike O'Brien, founder/director of Public Leadership Ministries. He is a member of Rolling Hills Community Church. President Bob Barnett, manager/owner of Beaverton Grocery Outlet and an elder at Reformation Bible Church.

For more information:

See the Committee's web page at <http://www.teleport.com/nonprofit/committee> or contact Dr. John Shaw at email: sti@teleport.com FAX: (503) 591-0619 or write to The Committee for Biblical Principles in Government, P. O. Box 6031, Aloha, OR 97007.

The Philosophy Of Gordon Clark

By Joseph P. Braswell



If we may utilize the contemporary method of classifying epistemological positions as varieties of either *foundationalism*, *coherentism*, or *contextualism*, we might find it best to regard Van Tillian presuppositionalism as, formally, an instance of contextualist epistemology.¹ Over against our Van Tillian contextualism and its assertion that the Triune God forms the ultimate and

absolute context of knowing stand various attempts at employing a form of foundationalism for the task of epistemic warrant in Christian apologetics. There are of course the rational-evidentialists who simply attempt to use the foundationalism of the Enlightenment empiricism in the vein of Thomas Reid's Common-Sense realism, and this is still the most common approach in popular apologetics. There is, however, also the foundationalism of Gordon H. Clark's presuppositionalism, which is essentially Cartesian. It is this latter that here concerns us.

If we may compare Van Til with Kant on the one point that both ask how knowledge is possible, we may compare Clark with Descartes in that both begin by asking instead *whether* knowledge is possible. That is, Van Til and Kant accept as a *given* that knowledge is *actual*; they do not entertain any doubts about the actuality of successful knowing, but, accepting this as a fact, seek to lay bare the transcendental conditions which explain how it is that this knowing occurs—*i.e.*, what must be presupposed to account for this phenomenon. Descartes and Clark, on the other hand, begin by questioning *whether* there is actual knowledge, and they bracket out all claims to knowledge of anything until it is first demonstrated that knowledge as such is even possible.

In a manner very similar to Descartes' use of the method of hyperbolic doubt, Clark begins with a methodical skepticism that, setting the epistemic standard as that absolute certainty lying beyond any and every possible (including even the most remotely possible) doubt, critiques the inadequacy of epistemic claims based upon empiricism. No certain knowledge—no sure foundation—is obtainable on the basis of empiricism. Clark, however, is a *dogmatist*, not a Cartesian rationalist, so he, in seeming voluntarism, merely chooses what appears to be an altogether arbitrary *pou sto* that is not (as the Cartesian Cogito) proposed as an indubitable, *self-evident* truth of reason (a clear and distinct idea based on the consistency of reason). Nevertheless, he accepts the Geometric model posited by Descartes (a hallmark of Cartesianism that was employed most

consistently by the Cartesian Spinoza) and makes his starting point an *axiom*.

Of course, we must be fair to Clark and note his justification for what seems to be an arbitrary and autonomous choice, an act of pure volition of a first principle that formally is on par with anyone else's choice of any other starting point. What Clark has done is not done in a vacuum, and we cannot look at it in abstraction as though (despite appearances) it were sheer dogmatism. Clark's axiom is the *axiom of revelation*; it is a revealed truth, not a truth man has autonomously discovered or simply posited of himself in a Sartrean manner. *God* has disclosed this truth to Clark; the Spirit of God bears witness to it in Clark's consciousness, attesting to its truth convincingly with a full persuasion that issues in subjective certainty. Nevertheless, Clark knows that not all men have faith. This proposed axiom is not a universally self-evident truth, one that all men—believers and unbelievers alike—can see and judge to be a necessary truth by some alleged common principle of reason (logic). It cannot be justified in such a way; it can only be judged by its successful results in saving us from skepticism.²

For Clark, logic is the common ground-principle between believers and unbelievers (based on the argument in book *gamma* of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*), but logic needs true premises—premises that are logically primitive, *basic* beliefs. We must have a source of such incontrovertibly certain truths—foundational truths—if we are to deduce anything by means of logic, since conclusions are only as good as the premises from which they derive. Clark also believes (following Augustine) that the assertion of skepticism is self-refuting and that skepticism is the *reductio ad absurdum* of any epistemological theory (*i.e.*, any theory that leads to skepticism can be eliminated from further consideration). He thus seeks to eliminate all competition to his axiom by reducing all other epistemological contenders to skepticism. After the field is cleared of rationalism and empiricism, if he can show that the axiom he has proposed succeeds in making some knowledge possible (a set of propositions, however limited in number), he believes he has justified his starting point. The only test of his system of propositions is the logical test of the internal consistency of the system *qua* a coherent, noncontradictory system.

The Cartesian Predicament

If we are to draw comparisons between Clark and Descartes, asserting that Clark is in some ways a *Cartesian*, it will prove helpful as a preliminary to sketch Descartes' philosophy. In a nutshell, Descartes, with his foundation in the *Cogito*, comes face to face with the so-called *Cartesian Circle* of the "Third Meditation." The problem for Descartes is how to move from coherence to correspondence, to make the clear and distinct ideas refer beyond the mere contents of his consciousness (the egocentric predicament). These ideas carry their own subjective certainty; Descartes finds that, according to the consistency of reason, they are indubitable, and he is constrained to assent to their truth by his very nature. Nevertheless, beyond this first-order level of psychological necessity, there lies the second-order problem of the omnipotent demon ("First Meditation") who

may be malevolently deceiving Descartes by means of logic, compelling him to believe a lie on the basis of logical necessity and its inherent cogency. Logic compels Descartes' belief, but reason may not answer to the way things are in the extra-mental world of *res extensa* that must, if knowledge is to be justified, agree with the clear and distinct ideas Descartes has formed of it in the "wax experiment" of the "Second Meditation." Until the possibility is eliminated beyond all doubt that he has been so constituted as to be incapable of believing truth, he cannot get beyond his own consciousness to speak of an external world; he must know with certainty that logic fits reality, that the consistency of reason lays hold of truth in the sense of correspondence so that our clear and distinct ideas refer. Descartes gets to the world beyond by means of the *veracitas Dei*. God is not a deceiver, so his creation by God as a rational being warrants his confidence that reason is a sure guide to truth. The "Third Meditation" offers an argument for the existence of God that allegedly bridges the gap from the realm of Descartes' clear and distinct ideas to reality beyond. Descartes, realizing his own finitude and imperfection (his epistemological predicament of ignorance), can only know imperfection relative to a criteriological idea of perfection that he somehow possesses. He thus has an idea of God as the infinitely perfect being. This idea is either self-generated or its source is external. Descartes eliminates the possibility of self-generation because this would make the source inadequate to the content. The only adequate explanation of this idea is that God has implanted it in him, has caused him to have it. Thus, the idea has reference; he cannot *not* believe in God. That is, whenever he thinks about God (forms this clear and distinct idea of the perfect being), he is compelled to believe that God exists. He thus has arrived at an ontological proposition, an indubitably certain belief about a real state of affairs beyond his own consciousness wherein the consistency of reason asserts what must exist *in re*. Accordingly, so long as he keeps this belief before him, he cannot doubt what else reason informs him of concerning the external world. The second-order level of doubt is eliminated.

Descartes' problem is that most philosophers do not believe that his argument for God's existence is valid. Obviously, if belief in God is not justified, we cannot get the facts; we cannot bridge the gap to make a connection with an external (extramental) reality. Rationalism requires a valid proof of God to make contact between reason and facts, lest it remain but an abstract thought-experiment, an exercise of the speculative imagination that posits relations without *relata*—empty concepts.

Clark's Dogmatism

Clark recognizes this problem and invites us to abandon rationalism for dogmatism. Let us abandon the idea of valid theistic proofs and simply presuppose God, for without God we cannot get the facts. Rather than a conclusion of a prior argument, belief in God must be taken as a premise for all subsequent arguments; "God exists" must be logically primitive—a basic belief. Thus, while Descartes could not validly get inside the circle of knowing, Clark's solution seems

to be the proposal that we will simply begin there, accepting that belief in God solves the problem of reference.

In a sense this proposal is acceptable to a Van Tillian. It is acceptable because man is the image of God and has a *sensus deitatis* and because man is everywhere surrounded by God's revelation (general revelation). That is, the Van Tillian acknowledges that we can and should begin with belief in God, inside a *theistic* circle of knowing. Clark, however, does not work from the assumption that men in fact, to some extent, know the world truly (apprehend moments of truth) because all men know God. Instead, he asks us to begin in a vacuum with the Bible as the Word of God. Men know God only from the Bible, and thus they do not know the world unless they believe that the Bible is God's Word and know what it says. Whereas Van Til justifies human knowing on the basis of a metaphysical presupposition (that man and the world are what the Bible says they are) and thus accounts for the unbeliever's true beliefs, Clark effectively limits the apprehension of truth exclusively to believers. Again, Clark does not seek to account transcendentally for the fact of knowledge (its actuality); he asks whether knowledge is possible and asserts that it is possible only for those who believe the Bible, limiting all knowledge to what can be logically derived from its propositions. In Clark's view, most of what we experience, what we are aware of, is not known; most of the beliefs we form cannot be epistemically asserted—and warranted—as true.

*Ultimately Clark disbelieves
his own axiom, for Scripture
itself teaches us that God is
made known in his works.*

The criticism of Clark's position is really much the same as the criticism of Descartes' position. Even as Descartes cannot proceed in his reconstruction of human knowledge without a valid argument for the existence of God that begins within his egocentric world (a world limited to the contents of his individual consciousness), so Clark can proceed only if he can know what the Bible says. He cannot simply start with a small and closed circle—a tautology. Neither can he begin with a purely formal and abstract concept of Scripture, affirming simply *that* the Bible is the Word of God in implicit faith, without any understanding of the *what* of Scripture. He must be sure that he is not using empty (undefined, meaningless) words. He must be sufficiently informed from the material content of Scripture—the *what* of the Bible—as to what propositions are being affirmed as divine revelation and especially what is meant by "God"—what *sort* of God we are referring to as the author of the Bible (obviously one whose authorship of this book entails its absolute veracity). Yet to do all that he must be able to identify (locate, point to) the Bible,

distinguishing it from other objects, and he must be able to read the Bible or hear its message proclaimed. Knowledge of the Bible depends to some extent upon reliable sense-experience. However, Clark, adopting the stance of the Pyhrronean skeptics, has cast all sense-experience into question. According to Clark, we know nothing on the basis of perception, for what we think we see and hear is subject to Cartesian doubt (falling short of absolute and unassailable certainty). Yet, whereas Descartes believed that belief in God warranted belief in the empirical ("Sixth Meditation"), Clark—apparently throwing out the empirical baby with the empiricist bathwater—refuses to go this route and so seems to have no justifiable way of coming into epistemic contact with, being informed by, what the Bible teaches.

This refusal is, of course, simply a consistent application of his foundationalism. He cannot admit dependence upon sensory information to know the Bible without making knowledge via the senses a matter of basic belief alongside the Bible. It would do him no good, based upon the linear-inference method of procedure of foundationalist epistemology, to justify the general reliability of first-order empirical propositions—that I seem to see X, given certain conditions (good lighting, good eyesight, sobriety, lucidity, etc.), warrants my believing that I truly see X, that X is actually there to be seen—from what the Bible teaches; he would have to posit a belief in this reliability alongside his belief that the Bible is the word of God as a coordinate basic belief. If the axiom of revelation is the only basic belief postulated, anything else must be an inference from it, and our beliefs about what the Bible says cannot be dependent upon believing anything else.

However, let us assume that Clark can, after all, come to know the set of Biblical propositions, that these truths have somehow become present to his mind in a manner of intellectual illumination that altogether bypasses the use of the senses. Clark, ever the consistent foundationalist, maintains that humanly knowable truth is limited to these explicit statements and to what follows as good and necessary consequences of them (what we can validly deduce from them as premises of a syllogism). Whatever we can know in any field—history, mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, biology, etc.—is narrowly restricted to these basic beliefs and the valid inferences drawn from them. Here lies a crucial difference between Clark's and Van Til's respective epistemologies, for, to a Van Tillian, Clark's position seems narrow and impoverished—a very meager knowledge.

The Superiority of Van Til's View

The most tragic aspect of Clark's *a priori* approach, however, is that, in a Procrustean manner, it attempts to force the facts to fit a preconceived theory. The theory is imposed legislatively upon the facts of Scripture, ignoring and suppressing what does not conform to the dictates of the theory. Ultimately Clark disbelieves his own axiom, for Scripture itself teaches us that God is made known in his works. Clark cannot do justice to natural (or general) revelation—the revelational witness-character of every fact of creation. One has to know these facts in order to understand what they covenantally reveal about God

and his purposes, but Clark denies that we do in fact know such things. For him statements about the world based upon our empirical experience cannot be true. His epistemology cannot account for any knowledge that is not strictly deduced from Biblical statements, but this ironically involves a tacit rejection of many Biblical statements. The fact is, we must bring a good deal of background information with us to the interpretation of Scripture; we cannot understand Scripture without knowing a lot of other things.

This is why we cannot accept Clark's methodology. We cannot be foundationalists; we must be contextualists. God wants us as his images to know the world he has given to us as our sphere of dominion. Only Van Til's philosophy of revelation provides us with the riches of this divine gift, that we might fully appreciate it and better know God by knowing his creation, knowing God through his general revelation given in creation in concert with Scripture as our "glasses" (the correlativity of Nature and Scripture). Clark disparages this grant and disbelieves what his own axiom authoritatively asserts to be our epistemic situation.

¹ Obviously, we do not simply wish to categorize it as such without qualification. We must ever keep the essential antithesis between Christian-Theism and antitheism—between theonomy and every thought not captive to the obedience of Christ. We know that the wisdom of God and the wisdom of this age stand diametrically over against each other as mutually exclusive: light and darkness, righteousness and wickedness, Christ and Belial have nothing in common. Accordingly, the substantive difference between Van Til's epistemology, on the one hand, and all forms of contextualism belies appearance of similarity, and unbelieving contextualism actually has more in common with coherentism and foundationalism than with Christian-Theistic epistemology. Nevertheless, as Van Til himself used Idealism's terminology and categories as a means of accommodated communication, the contextualist model is a useful means for effectively presenting the Christian theory of knowledge.

² This is why Clark is really a foundationalist. He has a set of basic beliefs and thus no infinite regress. He believes that the Bible is objectively self-attesting, having an *in se* absolute authority that carries its own self-evident warrant for belief (the problem for those who do not *see* this is subjective). Nevertheless, his dogmatism will appear to outsiders (those without the gift of faith) as more akin to coherentism. One's faith in the Bible is justified in the circular manner of coherentism (as opposed to foundationalism's linear inferences). The warrant offered to the unbeliever is the whole system and its self-consistency, not the manifestly basic character of Biblical propositions. In apologetics one does not really offer the "axiom of revelation" as a self-warranting basic belief, but as an integral part of a whole system, and the Bible is thus justified because the system—a closed system—must be accepted or rejected as a whole (all or nothing), with the only alternative to accepting it being skepticism.

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A Reconstructed African View of Wildlife

By Peter Hammond



The Chalcedon article "A Reconstructed View of Wild Animals" by my good friend Brian Abshire was most entertaining and very well written. I appreciated the humor as well as the serious points made and warnings given.

There is no doubt that wild animals will continue to be wild—and dangerous—until the Lord God makes the lion to lie down with the lamb (*Is. 11:6-9*). However, I am obligated to offer some African perspectives on this subject which will hopefully contribute to the ongoing debate of what is our Christian responsibility towards God's creation. Certainly I believe it would be beneficial to balance out an American hunter's perspective with my African animal lover's view.

Having been born and brought up in Africa, the fact is that some of my friends have been animals. My best friends when I was small were Vivian, a lioness, and Malcolm, a leopard. I spent many hours wrestling and cuddling with these magnificent animals. I used to go out with my brother to break hunter's traps and free, or care for, injured animals. I've been involved in rescuing penguins from oil slicks and saving cats, dogs and baboons from painful experiments in laboratories. I've also adopted abandoned or stray cats from slums and squatter camps and campaigned against fur fashion shops and ivory poaching.

Yes, I've been bitten by dogs (and beaten unconscious by people). And my daughter Andrea was knocked off her feet by an irate cow when she slipped through a fence at Kwa Sizabantu mission to pet a young calf! Two of my motorbike crashes were caused by strange dogs running out and biting my leg as I rode past.

While camping out in the bush I've awakened to the foul stench of a hyena attempting to do CPR on my face. It is most certainly wise to brush one's teeth before retiring for the night as these scavengers are attracted to rotting meat (however, in my experience these scavengers are far more pleasant visitors than Revenue Service officials). It also helps to lay one's sleeping bag under a thorn bush (unless you're prone to sleep

walking, of course). Our teams have also encountered numerous problems from *flat dogs*—(crocodiles, also known as *mobile handbags*)—and hippos while crossing rivers.



It's true that there are "educated idiots" who offer themselves as "take out" food for lions and hyenas. In the wild, one needs to take reasonable precautions. Naturally self-defense—whether in the face of human or animal threats—is a Biblical necessity. (Though the human threat is obviously far greater.) Worshipping nature is pagan idolatry. However, Christian compassion and concern is not. Several of our missionaries have been game rangers, some have had lions, wildcats and leopards as pets. All of us are deeply concerned about the destruction of nature in Africa.

I have no ethical problem with a person (or any predator) hunting for food. I do most certainly oppose trophy hunting. There is a world of difference between being forced to hunt buck for survival and choosing to hunt lions for sport. Hundreds of thousands of elephants have been slaughtered by greedy men—merely for their ivory tusks. Thousands of Rhino have been killed because some pagans in Asia think that Rhino horn is an aphrodisiac! Africa's rich heritage of wildlife is being destroyed by corrupt government officials, such as Zimbabwean cabinet ministers, who are masterminding this wholesale destruction. And of course as the wildlife dwindles so too the tourists stop coming and the result is even greater unemployment and impoverishment.

God, our Creator, never gave us a blank check for anything—let alone for his creation. Ivory poachers, trophy hunters, careless slash-and-burn "farmers," overgrazing farmers, litterbugs and corrupt governments are destroying our continent. I have been nauseated at the sight of huge animal graveyards—vast herds of elephants slaughtered for their tusks, zebra killed merely for their skins and for their tails to be made into fly swatters! Leg-hold traps not only cause long and excruciatingly painful deaths but three out of every four animals killed by these traps are what furriers term "*trash*"—unusable animals not targeted by the trappers.

Alongside the main road across Botswana are the two longest rubbish dumps in the world: hundreds of kilometers of tin cans, broken bottles, plastic packets and other refuse of a careless and destructive people. Even at some of the greatest natural wonders such as Victoria Falls (the largest waterfall in the world) we have to negotiate through the broken bottles, beer cans and cigarette stubs of the wicked. I firmly believe that this grieves

the heart of God. Painful experiments on animals, leg-hold traps and the fur-for-fashion industry are reprehensible and have no place in a Christian culture.

Those who can so carelessly and destructively treat God's magnificent creation with such contempt deserve to incur the wrath of God. Unfortunately, too many conservatives (Christians included) in their knee-jerk reaction to the hug-a-hippo, kiss-a-crocodile, lick-a-lizard, tree-hugging, eco-freaks have, I fear, over-reacted to an un-Biblical extreme where animals don't matter. God made the animals and they do matter (*Gen. 1:24-25*). Not as much as people made in the image of God—but they most certainly deserve our compassionate concern and careful stewardship. If our Lord Jesus cares about the sparrows then so too should we (*Mt. 6:26*). Obviously animals matter to God because the presence of animals in Ninevah is recorded as a reason for God's mercy in not destroying that sinful city (*Jon. 4*).



In fact, I truly praise God for the recent heightened concern for animals and the environment—however excessive and unbalanced at times. Even though pagans are often in the forefront abusing it for radical agendas, it is still a positive development to inject some serious concern for creation. We Reformed Christians should retake this concern for the environment and reconstruct it with Biblical balance. We need to take seriously the doctrine of creation and man's stewardship of God's creation. We are answerable to God for how we treat animals.

My conversion to Christ twenty years ago and commitment to the Reformation ten years ago has actually intensified my love for God's creation. It is exhilarating to witness an African sunrise in an unspoiled corner of our continent. I have woken up to a hippo grazing near my sleeping bag as a fish eagle swooped out of the sky and plucked a fish out of the mighty Zambezi river right in front of me. I have walked past a pride of lions feeding on a zebra. I've stroked and fed orphaned elephants and giraffe—and accidentally stepped on sleeping crocodiles and snakes!

I believe that it is pleasing in God's sight when we do what we can to secure the well being of his animals. All animals belong to God (*Ps. 50:10-11*) and they fulfil his creative joy and purpose.

Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all the depths, Mountains, and all hills, beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl.

Ps. 148:9, 10

In 1994 (after the new Mandela government had abolished prayer in our Parliament) Cape Town was hit by the worst storm in living memory and by our worst ecological disaster of this century. A Red Chinese oil tanker, the Apolo Sea, sank in the storm and soaked our beautiful beaches in a vast deadly oil spill of over 2,000 tons of bunker fuel. The Cape Peninsula is home to a unique species of African penguins who were now doomed to extinction. Seabirds have a natural waterproofing against sea water in the form of feathers coated by body oil generated in their systems. The feather structure also aids the waterproofing. The oil affects this structure causing the bird to become waterlogged and hypothermic. Birds that are oiled cannot feed, develop lung, liver and other diseases, and eventually die if not treated swiftly and effectively.

Capetonians responded magnificently in a herculean effort to rescue the 10,000 doomed penguins. Our Air Force pilots flew in shocking storm conditions to land on Dassen Island where most of the oil soaked birds were. Volunteers slipped and fell amongst the mud and rocks to capture the terrified creatures. Our mission staff joined hundreds of others cleaning up, feeding and treating the dehydrated and starved penguins. We all had lots of cut fingers to show for it after this worthy project. Ultimately, we succeeded in saving the lives of over 4,600 penguins who survived and were re-introduced into the wild. There was a general consensus that it was pleasing to the Lord that we did what we could to help reverse some of the suffering caused by man's sinfulness and carelessness.

All of creation has suffered as a result of man's rebellion against God and fall into sin. All creation must inevitably benefit from man's repentance and redemption. Biblical Reformation must result in more compassionate treatment of animals—including wildlife.

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it.
Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord.

Ps. 96:11-12

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“Rebuttal” to Peter Hammond

By Rev. Brian Abshire

My very good friend Peter Hammond has made some excellent points in his essay and the thoughtful Christian who with him appreciates the grandeur and wonder of the image of God revealed through the created order can only say “Amen.” However, non-hunters often do not appreciate the very real love and respect that hunters have for animals. Without getting misty eyed (or mystical) they see the hunting experience as something almost reverential. They are as disgusted, shocked and outraged as Peter by the poachers and butchers he described.

The only “rebuttal” I would offer to Peter’s thesis is his objection to “trophy hunting” and that goes to the economics of game management. Land will be used according to its best economic value. The greatest threat to African wildlife comes from habitat destruction due to inefficient farming. If the land is not saved for wildlife, then the animals will disappear. Yet, land is precious, it costs something to preserve: land for one use (animals) and not another (farming). Who pays the cost?

The short answer is “hunters.” Hunters pour millions of dollars every year in preserving habitats so that wild animals do not disappear by paying enormous game fees for the privilege of hunting. Thus in Africa, the best insurance of habitat protection possible is the trophy hunter. These fees bring in more revenue than farming, allowing the land to be kept free from human encroachment and protecting the habitat for future generations of the wild game. Each lion shot, for example, allows thousands of other species to flourish in the same environment.

Game must be managed. In the “natural” course of events, animals will be fruitful, and multiply and then push the limits of their habitat. For example, if there are too many elephants in a certain area, then the entire habitat is threatened because of the massive destruction they do when they feed. Game wardens have to cull the herds both for the benefit of the elephants, and all the other species. Trophy hunters pay for the privilege of keeping the herds manageable.

In the same way, there is an optimum ratio of predators to prey. If there are too many lions, then the herbivores are threatened, and the lions cross from the preserve into someone’s back yard. The number of lions needs to be managed. The trophy hunter, by shooting that lion, is not only contributing to the local economy, but he is also making sure that the habitat is protected, and all the animals benefit.

Other than that, I welcome Peter’s timely and important comments.

Capitalism, Socialism, or a “Third Way”?

By Sheldon Richman



Political economy has been debated for many years and yet relatively little progress has been made. The debate is littered with false alternatives and other fallacies that keep us locked into thinking that guarantees eventual stagnation and then decline.

The recent summit of industrial countries in Denver is a case in point. An article in the *Washington Post* made

much of the fact that the leaders of those nations had a spirited discussion of the American way of running an economy versus the European way. Yet the difference is not so stark.

As the *Post* put it, “For many, this Rocky Mountain standoff only seemed to confirm a widely held view that there is a stark, fundamental choice to be made between a hardhearted capitalism, in which workers are sacrificed at the altar of lower prices and higher profits, or a soft-hearted capitalism that sacrifices jobs and growth for economic security.

Were that the choice, the world would indeed be an unfortunate place. But the statement is barely coherent. In the marketplace, lower prices and higher profits indicate rising productivity, which in turn expands opportunity and raises incomes. There is no sacrifice of workers. The notion of “soft-hearted capitalism” is also incoherent. How can you have economic security at a cost of jobs and growth? Real security comes from burgeoning opportunities and rising living standards.

Social programs rot the human spirit. They may provide cash and services, although at the expense of productivity. But they also tether citizens to the state, eroding their independence and dehumanizing them.

Economists, we are told, think we can have the best of both: security and growth. This is the so-called “third way,”

the Holy Grail of political economy. If by both, they mean a comprehensive government safety net and a vibrant market economy, no one has found out how to accomplish this. Europe doesn't know what growth is. The United States grows sluggishly. In contrast, the nineteenth-century economy grew dramatically, lifting an entire society out of poverty, lengthening lives, and creating the most advanced society in history.

According to the *Post*, “Advocates of a ‘third way’ say there is nothing wrong with redistributing the rewards of a market economy after it has done its job, as long as it is carried out in a way that doesn't significantly alter basic market dynamics.” But there is no time that can be described as “after it [the market] has done its job.” The production of wealth is a continuing job. If government “redistributes” rewards today, it affects how the market will operate tomorrow because producers will have observed the redistribution. Why should they go on producing if they cannot keep their earnings? Taxation, the engine of the transfer machine, must alter market dynamics.

Some economists think a consumption tax leaves incentives in place. But the very purpose of production is consumption, and the purpose of savings is future consumption. Tax consumption and you tamper with the marketplace fundamentally.

Economists like to point to cases, such as the Netherlands, where government spending is as high as 50 percent of GDP but unemployment is not much higher than in the United States. These anecdotes are misleading. What would those economies look like without government intervention? To the extent that the entrepreneurial process is stifled, people are worse off than they would have been. Social programs can't make up for that lost wealth and opportunity.

Worse than that, social programs rot the human spirit. They may provide cash and services, although at the expense of productivity. But they also tether citizens to the state, eroding their independence and dehumanizing them. That is the real story of the welfare state.

Besides that, the entire system rests on the use of physical force against peaceful, productive people. Considering that freedom is fully capable of producing what the social programs are supposed to produce—medical care, day care, pensions—there is simply no case for the welfare state.

The basic fallacy in the search for a third way is the belief that freedom and free markets are not enough. But they are enough. There is no third way because there is no compromise between freedom and force. We'd sooner find a triangle with four sides.

Sheldon Richman is vice president of policy affairs at The Future of Freedom Foundation in Fairfax, Virginia., and author of its forthcoming book Your Money or Your Life: Why We Must Abolish the Income Tax.

Rationalism and Tyranny

By R. J. Rushdoony

Rationalism is both impersonal and non-historical in character. In its Greek form, rationalism posited a god as the First Cause because its thinking was hostile to an infinite regress of causes, and hence a god as the first cause was required. Beyond that, he had little function. As the First Cause, this god was the ultimate idea in that he made unnecessary a blind regression from one cause to another in search of an ever-elusive beginning. This god was impersonal; he was simply a logical necessity as a First Cause, not an object of worship nor investigation, but a limiting concept.

In the development of philosophical thought, the idea of an eternal regress lost its threat to reason. One development in the modern era was the insistence by some pragmatic naturalists that, even as Christianity takes God as its given, so naturalism takes the universe as its given. One such professor stated that arguing against creationism was a mistake: one should simply say, "Even as God is your given, the universe is mine." The reaction to his position was not favorable: the students wanted certainty for their view, which science seemingly offered.

Rationalism offers certainty if its basic premise is accepted, namely, that all things are understandable and penetrable by reason. But basic to Christianity is the premise of the incomprehensibility of God. He is far beyond man's comprehension and he can only be known by revelation. For the mind of man to comprehend God's eternity, infinity, omniscience, omnipotence, and being is impossible. God can be known only by his self-revelation, and then he can be known *truly* but not exhaustively. This was made clear to Moses by the burning bush. Moses, troubled by God's age-long silence during Israel's Egyptian sojourn, asked, "What is your Name?" Names were then definitions, and Moses asked God to define himself so that he might be comprehensible. This God refused to do. He simply said, Tell them, the people of Israel, "I AM hath sent me unto you" (*Ex 3:14*). I am He Who Is, the Eternal One. However, I can be known by my self-revelation, for I am "the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (*Ex 3:15*). God reveals himself: he is not discovered by reason because reason poses as an independent faculty in rationalism and as the definer, not the receiver, of truth.

John Calvin stressed the primacy of God's self-revelation and man's assent to it, and this gave to consistent Calvinists an unrivaled strength. Francis William Buckler observed that in the Reformation era, "Calvinist renegades were rare" (Francis William Bucker, "An Anthropological Approach to the Origins of Protestantism," in Vergiluis Ferm, editor, *The Protestant Credo*, p. 152. New York, NY: Philosophical Library, 1953). To stand on the sovereignty of God and of his revelation is to stand on more than one's rationalizations.

Rationalization always misdefines man. For Aristotle, man

was a political animal. For Epictetus, in line with this, man is a member of a city, a *polis*: still a political animal. All non-Biblical definitions of God reduce man to a creature of natural forces, to another kind of animal, to cite Aristotle. Only in his reason does he to some degree rise above himself. It was thus logical to conclude that people, the political animals, should be ruled by philosopher kings, men whose rationalism had put them in touch with the ultimate (and abstract) ideas. Other men were as cattle and sheep, to be herded into the way they should go.

According to God's revelation, man is created in God's image, with his communicable attributes, knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures (*Gen. 1:26-28; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24*). In the Platonic tradition, reason is a tool for domination, to be used by the philosopher-kings to control mankind. In the Christian Faith, the great sacrament of the Lord's table is accompanied by a collection for charity.

Rationalism sees itself as a liberating force in history when in fact it has been a force for tyranny. Plato's followers became the tyrants of Greece, and, with the Renaissance, art and tyranny, both neo-Platonic, flourished and brought evils in their wake.

Random Notes, 74

1. Since I was born in 1916, when I started school, Woodrow Wilson's crusade, World War I, the 18th Amendment to the US Constitution forbidding the sale and use of intoxicating beverages, and women's suffrage were all newly accomplished. All three rested on a religious premise, that original sin was a myth, and a changed environment could change man. One of two teachers, women, felt that the passing of Prohibition and women's suffrage would change the world, and the latter was seen as adding "a moral dimension" to politics. But women have proven to be, like men, fallen creatures, no less capable of sinning than men! Meanwhile, the same error, a refusal to see man as fallen, as a sinner, undergirds contemporary economic thinking. Neither free trade advocates nor protectionists recognize the obvious fact of man's depravity, and their thinking is thus faulty. Economic activity has always been a fertile ground for man's sin to express itself.

2. In A.D. 389, Valentinian II, Theodosius, and Arcadius of Rome declared that Easter could not be a judicial date, nor could the seven days before and after the celebration of the resurrection be other than a holiday.

3. During the reign of King James I of Britain, the court became the locale of his favorites, homosexuals. At the same time, female fashions were masculinized; their hair was "cut short or shorn," and their manners altered.

4. At 81, having been a child in a rural area, I saw the horse and buggy age; now we have space exploration, at vast cost to

taxpayers. The biggest change is, however, in another area, the intellectual one. We have re-paganized our world after the pattern of Charles Darwin. This means that we have gone from a God-created and God-governed world, one ruled by God's providence and a realm of total meaning, to a belief in a meaningless and blind world of change, a world of the fortuitous concourse of atoms. We have seen meaning and morality progressively denied to man and the universe. Why the surprise then at the growing barbarization of life? Fyodor Dostoyevsky observed, well over a century ago, that, if there is no God, all things (meaning all horrors) are possible. We are increasingly vindicating his insight.

Now some people insist that all will be well, because "the pendulum will swing back." This is, however, simply an echo of the old pagan belief in the wheel of fortune, in eternal recurrence without meaning. The world around us is in the grips of a new and worse paganism, and only regeneration will alter its downward course. Expecting our present world to turn from its evil ways without Christ is like expecting graveyard inhabitants to breed children.

5. Prudence Jones and Nigel Remick, in *A History of Pagan Europe* (1995, 1997), call attention to the fact that peoples of imperial Rome found the notion of sin "foreign." They also could not grasp the idea of heresy, or choice. They believed the choice of gods or goddesses was man's right. They preferred myth to history (myth being something of man's devising). Repentance was to them a strange idea. Being man-centered in their religions, they saw it as the duty of the gods to please man, not man the gods. Too much of our church religion, even when professing to believe in Christ, is pagan in that it wants a church and or doctrine to please men. Thus, we have "designer churches" and like abominations. One couple, on visiting such a church, were called on by a pastor. When they asked, what does this church believe in, the quick response was, "What do you want us to believe?"

We are often told of Rome's "tolerance" of other religions. They were indeed very tolerant of any religion that did not challenge the states' sovereignty, which Christ did. Hence, the persecutions, the fundamental problem being, Who is the Lord? This is again the problem.

6. Since my student days, I have read much of, and about, James Joyce and Ezra Pound, two anti-Christian men who worked to create a post-Christian culture. Pound was a leader in the secularization of the messianic hope; he wanted "to recover the gods, and he saw his work as a *commedia agnostica*." He was radically anti-Christian. His intense anti-Jewish stand is excused by too many scholars, perhaps because they approve of his anti-Christianity, which they rarely mention. Pound's talents were quite meager, his pomposity great. In another era, the praise of Pound and Joyce will be remembered as an aberration of our time.

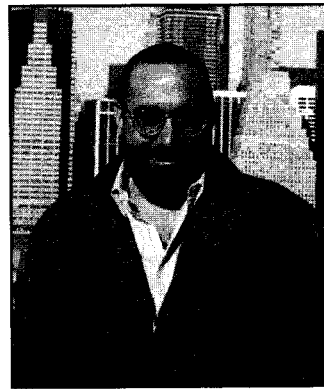
7. Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, in *New Religions as Global Cultures* (1997), call attention to an important fact. The "new age" idea, and the "Age of Aquarius," go back to Swedenborg's works (p. 91). Much of the nineteenth century world, in its errors, had its source in Swedenborg. Research in his thinking has been minimal because it would drive someone

out of his mind to spend too much time studying Swedenborg. At one time, as a student, I was tracing some Transcendentalist ideas, especially in Melville to Swedenborg, but I gave it up out of weariness!

MY BACK PAGES

The Age of M.A.I.D.S.

By Steve M. Schlissel



Late last year we sent out our newsletter which began, "Coming soon to a state near you: legal homosexual marriages." Since reprinted in various publications here and abroad, that letter warned that a case currently fought in Hawaii will very likely provide the precedent necessary, employing the full-faith and credit provision of Article IV of the Constitution of the United

States, to make homosexual marriages legal in all 50 of the "United" States.

Long-time friends and co-laborers, Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Johnston of Rome, GA, hand-delivered that newsletter to the Honorable Bob Barr, United States Congressman from Georgia's 7th District. More recently, Congressman Barr introduced "The Defense of Marriage Act," which "defines marriage for federal purposes as a legal union between one man and one woman," and "protects states from being compelled to honor another state's [recognition of] marriages between persons of the same sex." It was Messiah's newsletter, handed to him by Dr. and Mrs. Johnston, that served as the direct catalyst to this legislation. We are humbled, gratified and honored to have thus been of service. Yes, we are certainly happy this legislation passed. But we do not view this as a matter of substantive moral progress. Just ask yourself, What is the moral condition of a society which has to pass *legislation* defining marriage as being between one man and one woman?

The very fact that this became legislative material is a confession of first-order moral bankruptcy. Even worse is the fact that its introduction created a storm of controversy which spilled over into the press, precincts and pulpits of the land. Absorb this: the definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman is *controversial*. The ensuing controversy confirmed in us the opinion that the sodomite chant, "*We're here, we're queer—better get used to us,*" is an anthem by which we are even now being compelled to abide. Legal homosexual marriages are, more clearly today than before, inevitable.

How do we know this? To borrow the words of the songwriter, "*The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind*" and "*you don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.*" I submit to your judgment the following reasons, a full baker's dozen of 'em, for our persuasion that sodomite marriages *will* receive legal sanction in the US of A:

1. America has MAIDS (Moral Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). AIDS is an eloquent judgment on our land as it mirrors our moral malady. A microbe introduced into the system of an AIDS patient results in the dominance of that microbe unto the patient's death. That microbe would be easily defeated by the immune system of a healthy person. Having rejected the transcendent, universal, invariant ethic of Almighty God revealed in his Law, we have become subject to every wind of doctrine and the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. All that is necessary for the acceptance of an alien ethic in our culture is its introduction. If it is spoken about openly it will be accepted. (The only radical idea introduced in the last several years which has not become public policy is the legalization of drugs, and that is because the media is not yet sure what it thinks of the issue.) In an age of MAIDS, the goal of the radical is to get his idea introduced into the body. From that point on it's just a matter of time and marketing until it does its work. Our relativistic foundations of sand provide no ground from which to fight back. Instead of a "Thus saith the LORD," we hear arguments about "what most people think."
2. Such argumentation not only insures the acceptance of the new practice, it grants to the antagonist agents the pretense of arguing from a higher moral ground. You see, they present themselves as those who argue out of conviction, not convention, and they present themselves as sufferers in a cause. This holds a fascinating and winning attraction to people unaware of the worldview issues involved: their sympathies are naturally extended to the scrappy "underdogs."
3. Homosexuals can anticipate the legalization of their pseudo-unions because they have successfully captured the major media. It matters not so much what happens as who reports what happens. Spin is supreme, or, to use Van Til's phrase, "there are no uninterpreted 'facts.'" He who defines, wins, and nary a day goes by in which the homo cause is not promoted in the *New York Times* and on radio and television networks. The pro-homo spin on stage and in movies is relentless—and unanswered. Indeed, it cannot be "answered" on their turf. Since most American opinions are formed via osmosis from the cathode-ray-tube, that which plays best and most often on TV *will* be the majority opinion in America. And the fact is, homosexual marriage is an issue custom-made for TV argumentation (from the sodomite perspective). There are no "Christian soundbites" to leave with people that can compare with those conjured up by media-savvy homos like Barney Frank.
4. Homosexuals, enjoying the luxury of having a single, well-defined point of unity, have mastered the art of public opinion manipulation and political lobbying. They have also demonstrated mastery of the Internet as a tool to promote their agenda, whereas Christians seem to spend most of their time on the net bashing other Christians, or spleen-venting over the number of cups that will be found at a "really Reformed" Lord's Supper, and obsessing over similar earth-shaking issues.
5. Homosexual marriages have *already* been endorsed in their preliminary incarnation as "domestic partnerships" by a host of corporations and municipalities, which extend marriage-partner benefits to the pseudo-spouses. It will take more momentum than most can muster to push the rock back up over the hill from whence it came (though God will have no trouble doing it unaided).
6. Canada is poised to incorporate sentiment against homosexuals as part of the class of hate forbidden by national law. Canadians are not famous for resisting federal tyranny—as witnessed by the tendency of some of their churches to consistently cower before Revenue Canada—so we can expect the Bible soon to be on the index of forbidden books up North. Point: International pressure will be brought to bear on the USA, not to "hold the line," but to give in.
7. Culture, it has been noted, is religion externalized and made explicit (for more on this, send for the sermon "Christian Culture in a Multi-Cultural Age"). Laws don't last which are inconsistent with a society's *faith*. You get what you believe. Since law is religiously informed, and since we have long repudiated Christianity (in all its forms except modernist) as our society's faith foundation, it is futile to examine the tree for Christian fruit. Our laws will, however, reflect our evolutionary/egalitarian faith.
8. Legal homosexual marriage is inevitable because America, since 1860, has embraced egalitarianism over covenant as a governing worldview component. Egalitarianism "asserts that no privilege or franchise enjoyed by some adults in the state can be justly withheld from any other order of adults" (Dabney). It understands liberty as "each one's privilege to do what he chooses." But the Bible teaches that no one in any station has any rights except the rights conferred by God on those in that station as per his Word, and that liberty is the freedom to do that which God requires. Between these two theories of rights is an unbridgeable chasm, yet no small number of Christians, even entire denominations, are on the wrong side of the gap, to say nothing of the mass of Americans. If we do not go back to our wrong turn and repent of egalitarianism, we cannot possibly stand against the tide insisting upon its consistent implementation.
9. Egalitarianism is a foundational element of the competing worldview of unbelief. As such, it is a part of a comprehensive philosophy of life, including a philosophy of law. The egalitarian view of law was summarized by van Prinsterer: "Wherever the Revolution has been at work it has become apparent that it considers law to be a mere convention, a product of the human will. Law, thus ever changeable in its origin is delivered up to arbitrariness. . . . Lawfulness is replaced by 'legality.'" Homosexuals will be granted the right to marry because America's philosophy of

law is egalitarian to the core and has been for over a century. If law finds its origin in man, well, "Man gives, man takes away. Blessed be the name of man." The giving of laws is the function of a sovereign. If even certain Christians (such as dispensationalists) chafe at God's Law, why should humanists embrace it? Since God's (fixed) Law is out and man's (evolving) law is in, there is no legal reason to withhold from homos the right to solemnize their choice.

10. Christians are largely unlearned in worldview matters and are ill-prepared to be as radical as Christ requires. The fact that lukewarmness is repulsive to our Lord has not prevented a pervasive insipidity from overtaking Americanness. Thus we are both unable and unwilling to carry out a moral war from principle to practice. Bavinck warned us 95 years ago that conservative dualists have "no immovable conviction, . . . no strength of faith, no enthusiastic courage. And hence they are ever bound to lower the flag before the radicals, who have the courage of their convictions, who shrink from no inferences. . . . These are the men of the future. Conservatives and liberals die out, but the radicals and socialists are to be leaders in the twentieth century. They have agreed to a total and final clearing out of whatever of the old Christian worldview consciously or unconsciously still remains in our laws and morals, in our education and civilization." The war is between two internally consistent, though polar opposite, worldviews. One begins with God and covenant, the other with no Biblical God but with evolution and egalitarianism. The evolutionary egalitarians are prepared to go all the way to death for their convictions. Christians won't even go to church for theirs. It does not take a genius to predict who will be the short-term victor. Just as Bavinck foretold, "One fortification after another must then be sacrificed, one line of defense after another be abandoned, and one concession after another be granted." All because we are too timid, ignorant or lazy to argue and live from clear, God-of-the-Bible-based presuppositions. William Butler Yeats well described this state of affairs: "The best lack all conviction while the worst are full of passionate intensity."
11. The Episcopal Church has cleared the way for the institutionalization of homosexuality in its extensive (though dwindling) parishes by its recent ruling determining that the ordination of homosexuals is consistent with church dogma. If they can officiate, surely they can marry.
12. The most recent Supreme Court decision on homo matters struck down Colorado's right to define homosexuals as a group without special privileges. The fact that this was entirely schizophrenic of the court did not dissuade six justices from the opinion. For even egalitarians have long held that the "rights" they advocate do not automatically extend to criminals. Ten years ago the court ruled that state laws criminalizing sodomy are legal. Thus, the court said that states can treat a class of persons (sodomites) as criminals yet it now says these criminals cannot be denied rights accorded to law-abiders. Of course, the court will soon resolve the discrepancy by decriminalizing homosexuality

nationally. Colorado's governor (Romer) missed the finest opportunity in recent history for a lesser magistrate to defy federal tyranny. He should have announced plans for a Colorado Convention for Secession, denying the legitimacy of the Supreme Courts intrusion into the sovereign affairs of the state of Colorado.

13. Such a secessionist movement may yet gain steam, but first a word from the bill's sponsor. Even though Congressman Barr's Defense of Marriage Act became law, Barr, in his cover letter to his colleagues seeking co-sponsorship, explicitly — in bold, upper-case letter — states that "the bill *does not*: MAKE SAME SEX MARRIAGES ILLEGAL" or "PROHIBIT STATES FROM ALLOWING SAME SEX MARRIAGES" (all emphasis in the original). Rather, as we mentioned, the bill seeks only to define marriage *for federal purposes* as a union between one man and one woman and attempts to protect states from being compelled to honor another state's recognition of same-sex marriages. Thus this bill, the only such movement on the Hill, *explicitly concedes that it contains nothing to halt the inevitable*. And even what it does halt will be struck down by the Supreme Court, posthaste. This may then result in a defining moment for the USA. For while there is certainly no reason to expect a national conversion anytime soon, there is more reason to believe that various states can be gripped by the fear of God and seized by sanity should the federal government try to compel recognition of homosexual marriages. This *could* become the rallying point for the re-ignition of the true issue in the War of Northern Aggression, the issue buried beneath rubble and rhetoric even before the carpetbaggers set foot in the South: States' Rights. We'll see what happens. Interesting days ahead.

According to Josephus, the failure of Saul to "blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven" (*Dt. 25:17ff*) resulted in the issue of Haman who sought similarly to blot out the memory of the Jews (*Esther 3:1-10:3*). The world wasn't big enough for both. But Saul feared the opinion polls instead of God (*1 Sam. 15:22-24*). (Sound familiar?) Our collective failure to follow God's Law and utterly outlaw public homosexuals may result in homosexuals seeking to outlaw public orthodox Christianity. What the *New York Times* permits to be printed against Christians and Christianity they do not permit to be printed against any other group. That's the 1996 version of *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin Parsin*.

Steve Schlissel has been pastor of Messiah's Congregation in Brooklyn, NY since 1979. He serves as the Overseer of Urban Nations (a mission to the world in a single city), and is the Director of Meantime Ministries (an outreach to women who were sexually abused as children). Steve lives with his wife of 23 years, Jeanne, and their five children.

One of the things we are proud of is the many varied activities of our associates. Some of them are publishing important newsletters, and we take this opportunity to tell you of them.

1. ***The Lofton Letter*** by John Lofton, P.O. Box 1142, Laurel, Maryland 20725, e-mail address: JLoF@AOL.com, \$100 a year, monthly (20 pages).
2. Ian Hodge of Australia's Foundation for the Advancement of Christian Studies is an affiliate, and he publishes ***F.A.C.S. Report, Probe,*** and ***Christian Economics*** monthly, on a donation basis: write to him at P.O. Box 547, Ferny Hills, QLD 4055, Australia, Tel/fax 07-851-1265.
3. For those of you who read French, Jean-Marc Berthoud publishes several periodicals. For sample copies, send a donation and write to Jean-Marc Berthoud, Trabendan 16, Lausanne, CH 1006, Switzerland.
4. For the Chalcedon tapes, write to Christian Tape Productions, P.O. Box 1804, Murphys, California 95247. The twice monthly Easy Chairs are \$4.50 each, and the weekly Bible studies (two lessons on each tape), are also \$4.50. For a sample of either, send \$5; California residents add 7¹/₄% sales tax.
5. **Friends of Chalcedon** provides networking and other resources to Chalcedon and its supporters. It assists Chalcedon in producing books and video materials, hosts conferences to bring Chalcedon supporters in contact with each other, and refers Chalcedon supporters in ways to help Chalcedon. Friends of Chalcedon is at 4960 Almaden Expressway, #172, San Jose, CA 95118 [408] 997-9866 (phone and fax).

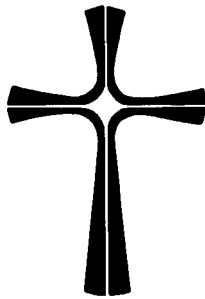
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Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition: "Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man . . ." This formula directly challenges every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative; Christ alone can announce that "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (*Matthew 28:18*). Historically, the Chalcedonian creed is therefore the foundation of Western liberty, for it sets limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of true human freedom (*Galatians 5:1*).

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